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THE CONSTANT NYMPH

By MARGARET KENNEDY

BOOK I

SANGER'S CIRCUS



# THE CONSTANT NYMPH

## CHAPTER I

AT THE time of his death the name of Albert Sanger was barely known to the musical public of Great Britain. Among the very few who had heard of him there were even some who called him Sanjé, in the French manner, being disinclined to suppose that great men are occasionally born in Hammersmith.

That, however, is where he was born, of lower middle-class parents, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The whole world knew of it as soon as he was dead and buried. Englishmen, discovering a new belonging, became excited; it appeared that Sanger had been very much heard of everywhere else. His claims to immortality were canvassed eagerly by people who hoped soon to have an opportunity of hearing his work. His idiom, which was demonstrably neither Latin nor Gothic nor yet Slav, was discovered to be Anglo-Saxon. Obituary columns talked of the gay simplicity of his rhythms, an unmistakably national feature, which, they declared, took one back to Chaucer. They lamented that yet another prophet had passed without honour in his own country.

But for this the British public was not entirely to blame; few people can sincerely admire a piece of music which they have not heard. During Sanger's lifetime his work was never performed in England. It was partly his own fault since he composed nothing but operas and these on a par-

ticularly grandiose scale. Their production was a risky enterprise, under the most promising conditions; and in England the conditions attending the production of an opera are never promising. The press suggested that other British composers had been heard in London repeatedly while Sanger languished in a little limbo of neglect. This was not quite the case. The limbo has never been as little as that.

Sanger, moreover, hated England, left it at an early age, never went back, and seldom spoke of it without some strong qualification.

Appreciation, though tardy, was generous when it came. A special effort was made, about a year after Sanger's death, and The Nine Muses, an enterprising repertory theatre south of the river, undertook the production of "Prester John," the shortest and simplest of the operas. The success of the piece was unqualified. All the intelligenzia and some others flocked to hear, and proved by their applause how ready they were to appreciate English music as soon as ever they got the chance. There were no howls of rage such as had arisen when "Prester John" was produced in Paris; no free fights in the gallery between the partizans and foes of the composer. The whole thing was as decorous as possible and the respectful ardour of the audience, their prolonged cheers at the end, left no doubt as to Sanger's posthumous position in his own country. They were not unlike the ovation accorded to a guest of honour who arrives a little late.

Having renounced his native land, Sanger adopted no other. He roved about from one European capital to another, never settling anywhere for long, driven forward by his strange, restless fancy. Usually he quartered himself upon his friends, who were accustomed to endure a great deal from him. He would stay with them for weeks, composing third acts in their spare bedrooms, producing operas which always failed financially, falling in love with their

wives, conducting their symphonies, and borrowing money from them. His preposterous family generally accompanied him. Few people could recollect quite how many children Sanger was supposed to have got, but there always seemed to be a good many and they were most shockingly brought up. They were, in their own orbit, known collectively as "Sanger's Circus," a nickname earned for them by their wandering existence, their vulgarity, their conspicuous brilliance, the noise they made, and the kind of naphtha-flare genius which illuminated everything they said or did. Their father had given them a good, sound musical training and nothing else. They had received no sort of regular education, but, in the course of their travels, had picked up a good deal of mental furniture and could abuse each other most profanely in the *argot* of four languages.

They seldom remained more than three months consecutively in the same place, but they had, as a matter of fact, one home of their own, an overgrown chalet in the Austrian Tyrol, where they were accustomed to spend the spring and early summer. Sanger liked Alpine scenery of a moderate kind and chose to have some place where he could entertain his friends. He invited all the world to come and stay with him, disregarding grandly his poverty and the want of proper sleeping accommodation in his house. His habitual sociability was unbounded; he was constantly picking up new acquaintances and these always got an invitation to the Karindehütte. The chalet was often full to overflowing and, to make room for the swarming guests, the children were sent out to sleep at neighbouring farms. Odd strangers of all classes and nationalities, people whose very names had been forgotten by Sanger, would turn up unexpectedly. No visitor could be sure what queer combination might be thrust into his room, or, indeed, into his very bed. Everybody was welcome.

These tumults and discomforts were endured by the guests for Sanger's sake. In his prime the enchantment of his convivial presence drew them to the house in the mountains as often as ever they were asked. The place had a spell which no one who had been there could forget. In after years it became a legend. It was the nearest approach to a home built by this wandering star, and, dying there, he was buried under the gentians and primulas in the pleasant alp before his door.

Visitors to the Karinderthal were generally obliged to spend the night at a little town in the valley of the Inn, for the last stage of the journey was long and slow. Persons coming from a distance usually arrived at this place late in the evening, and, if they could afford it, went to the Station Hotel. Not that the Station Hotel was costly, being, indeed, quite a humble little public-house; but Sanger's guests were sometimes very poor and travelled fourth-class, all among the mothers and babies and market baskets.

Among them and under them. Lewis Dodd, travelling up the Innthal one night late in May, got so far buried beneath the other fourth-class passengers that he found it difficult to leave the train at the right station and was very nearly carried on to Innsbruck. Disengaging himself in the nick of time, he got stiffly down on to a waste of railway lines, shouldered his knapsack and made for the Station Hotel, following an elderly porter who carried two large, beautiful leather suitcases. These belonged to a first-class passenger who had left the train without difficulty some five minutes earlier and was already established at the inn.

They crossed the station yard, a small gravelled enclosure surrounded by chestnuts all in bloom, like Christmas trees, with their thick spiky candles. Tall arc lamps among the tree trunks splashed the darkness here and there with pools of

white light and painted inky shadows among the brilliant leaves. Hidden in the night, all round the little town, were the mountains. The air of the snowfields, sharp and cool, came in puffs through the warm, heavy smell of chestnut blossoms. The first-class passenger, remarking it, had taken off his hat and wiped his forehead and murmured something about the heavenly beautiful *Bergluft*, before going in to his supper. Lewis also lifted up his face to the hidden ranges which, on clear nights, shut out the stars from the valley towns. He was very glad to be going back again to the lovely mountain spring and to his friend Sanger.

Both these travellers were on their way to the Karindehütte, but they did not discover each other until next morning, when they breakfasted at adjoining tables in the bare little coffee-room. Here they waited for the eggs they had ordered and observed one another suspiciously. Their mutual impressions were so little favourable that for some minutes they hesitated glumly on the brink of conversation.

The first-class passenger was a fat fellow who spoke fluent German with a French accent. He was probably a great deal younger than he looked. His clothes were impressive. He wore a magnificent suit, cut very square on the shoulders and a trifle too big for him. There was a good deal of unobtrusive but valuable jewellery about him, and a soft black hat lay on the table at his elbow. His figure was heavy and unagile. He had thick white hands, much manicured, and wore his dark hair *en brosse*, a style which ill-suited the full, fleshy curves of his pale face. His eyes, which should have been bold and greedy, were strangely unhappy and disclosed, in their direct gaze, an unexpected diffidence, an ingenuous modesty, entirely out of keeping with the rest of him. Of this he was aware; he seldom looked full at those people whom he wished to impress, but sometimes in his eagerness he forgot himself. His general air was excessively

urbane, and he looked oddly out of place in the Bahnhof coffee-room.

Lewis Dodd, on the other hand, was a lean youth, clothed in garments so nondescript as to merit no attention. He wore several waistcoats and had a yellow muffler round his neck. He, too, was pale with the kind of pallor that goes with ginger hair. Loose locks straggled across his bony forehead and hung in a sort of fringe over the muffler at the back of his neck. His young face was deeply furrowed, nor was there any reassurance to be found in his thin, rather cruel mouth, or in light, observant eyes, so intent that they rarely betrayed him. His companion, distrusting his countenance, found, nevertheless, a wonderful beauty in his hands which gave a look of extreme intelligence to everything that he did, as though an extra brain was lodged in each finger. Their strength and delicacy contradicted the harsh lines of his face, and it was this contrast which determined the stranger to make a conversational plunge. He observed, as a cock crowed boastfully in the garden outside:

"An egg has been laid. It is, perhaps, the event for which we wait."

Lewis made an abrupt statement in such execrable German that he was not understood. He repeated it in French:

"Cocks don't lay eggs."

"*Tiens!*" exclaimed the other in surprise. "One never supposed that they did."

"Hens," pursued Lewis, "don't crow."

"*Tiens!*"

Lewis, inspired, began suddenly and with skill to demonstrate the noise of a hen who has laid an egg. His companion started violently. The landlady, hearing the din in the kitchen and understanding it as a reproach, put her head in at the door and declared that the eggs ordered by the highly well-born gentlemen were already in the frying-pan.



Whereat Lewis left off clucking and began to play spillikens with the wooden toothpicks on the table.

His companion, who had never seen toothpicks put to so paltry a use before, raised his eyebrows, shrugged his shoulders, and turned away. From the leather portfolio beside him he took a fountain-pen very much mounted in gold, a small notebook, and a roll of manuscript music. This he began to cover with annotations and strange hieroglyphics, referring occasionally to the notebook. As he worked his large mobile features writhed continuously; he frowned, blinked, snorted, smiled, and raised his eyebrows in a kind of frenzy.

His activities were observed with melancholy attention. Lewis abandoned the toothpicks and regarded him closely, seized by the unpleasant idea that they were to be fellow-guests at the Karindehütte. This fat person must be going to stay with Sanger; there was no other explanation for him. For the rest of the journey they would be compelled to travel together. They might even have to share the spare room unless Kate could be persuaded otherwise. Kate, the eldest of Sanger's daughters, was the only person in the household who ever wrestled with the problem of guests and beds. She was kind and thoughtful.

The odious possibilities before him depressed Lewis very much. He was too easily persuaded that he should not like people. His own appearance was not conspicuously prepossessing and he had no business to be so critical. While he sat wondering how long it would be before they were betrayed to each other, the landlady, bringing in the eggs, did the deed. She knew him well for an intimate of the Sangers and lingered genially to enquire after his health and send her compliments to the family, for whom she had a great liking since they brought so many guests to her house. They had only been up in the Karindethal a fortnight, she told him, and she believed that they had come from Italy. One

of the young gentlemen had got lost on the way. Getting out of the train at a wayside station in the middle of the night, he had been left behind. His loss was not discovered for some hours as his family were all asleep. They had arrived in a great way about it. Fräulein Kate had wanted to go back, but Herr Sanger said that the child was old enough to look after itself. Fräulein Kate had wept and said that the poor little one had no money and no ticket. Gnädige Frau said that it served him right. They had argued most of the night about it, in this very room, sometimes in one language and sometimes in another, but in the end they decided to let the affair alone and went on to the Karindethal next day. The boy had turned up later.

Lewis listened and mumbled indistinct comments, aware that she had given him away. His fellow-traveller was listening eagerly, and enquired when they were alone:

"You are going to visit Mr. Sanger?"

"Yes."

"Ach! I also!" The gentleman observed Lewis afresh from his yellow muffler to his ragged socks. "My name," he said, "is Trigorin. Kiril Trigorin."

He made a sort of little bow in his place where he sat. Lewis made another exactly like it. The name awoke vague echoes but he could not place it. Kiril Trigorin! The man had a box-office look, and his jewellery was of the presentation order. Possibly an operatic tenor. He became aware that the situation required something from him. He said hurriedly:

"My name is Dodd."

"Dodd? You are English?"

"Yes."

"Dodd! Is it possible that you are Mr. Lewis Dodd?"

Trigorin became radiant and turned full upon Lewis his innocent, humble gaze, crying:

"Can it be . . . can it be that I am at last to have the pleasure, the privilege, of meeting so gifted a composer? One for whose genius I have always . . ."

"Yes, my name's Lewis."

Trigorin got up, clicked his heels, and made a really deferential bow. Lewis nervously did the same but was unable to avert a flood of polite felicitations upon his work, talents, and future. He learnt that Mr. Trigorin had watched his career with attention; that he was, of all the younger men, the most promising and the most likely to stand by Sanger's side; that his least popular work, the "Revolutionary Songs" for choir and orchestra, was indisputably the finest and showed a great advance upon his better-known Symphony in Three Keys; and that he must not be depressed because the public was taking a long time to discover him. With all original work, said Mr. Trigorin, this must be the case. The critics have always persecuted young genius. The plaudits of the herd are as nothing to the discerning appreciation of a small circle. Lewis found that his hand was seized and that he was being tearfully besought to rise above his own unpopularity.

"I should not mind it if I were you," ended Mr. Trigorin with great simplicity.

Lewis was not so grateful for this encouragement as he should have been. He disengaged his hand with a venomous look. It was not for the appreciation of people like this fat Slav that he had written the "Revolutionary Songs."

"In future," went on his friend, "we shall speak English. It is more better practice for me."

"All right," said Lewis.

"You have stayed at the Karindehütte before? But that is natural. You are the dear friend of Mr. Sanger."

"Am I?"

"It is well known. And what a privilege . . ."

And he was off again, undaunted by the limitations of his English. How great a genius was Sanger! Colossal! Nobody like him in the world! Lewis scarcely listened, for he had begun to remember who the fellow was. Surely his name suggested a famous ballerina. Irina Zhigalova! Of course! This was her husband, and a person of some ability if it was true that he designed all her ballets. But what on earth was he doing here?

From Trigorin's conversation an explanation of sorts was emerging. It seemed that he had arranged a ballet in the autumn for Sanger's opera "Akbar," and had got this invitation on the strength of it.

"Never before have I visited here," he ended confidentially.

This was evident; the odd thing was that he should have been invited now.

"This moment, you can imagine, my dear sir, is for me a very great one. I go to visit Mr. Sanger; I meet Mr. Dodd. I find myself in the company of two most distinguished men all in the one time. I am amazed."

Lewis thought that he would be more amazed when he got to the Karindehütte. But he said nothing.

"Of what," demanded the innocent creature, "does the family consist?"

"Who? The Sangers? You've not met them all?"

"Only Mr. Sanger. At Prague he was alone. I think it is a large family."

"Oh . . . well . . . yes . . . pretty big."

Trigorin wished for more details which Lewis was most reluctant to give. At last he said:

"Well, there's Madame."

"Madame?" said Trigorin dubiously. "You would say . . . Mrs. Sanger?"

"Yes," exclaimed Lewis, as though he had suddenly dis-

covered a relieving explanation for Madame. "And then there are the children."

"Many children?"

"Oh, yes. A lot of children." After a pause for thought he stated: "Seven!"

"Seven! And all the children of Madame?"

"Oh, no! Not all." There was another pause and then Mr. Dodd repeated: "Not all. Only one."

"Ach! Then the other six . . . they have had another mother?"

"Mothers."

"Mothers?"

"He's been married several times."

"So!"

"The first wife," said Lewis very glibly, "had two; the second four; and the third one. That makes seven."

"Please! Not so quick!"

Even when it was repeated more slowly Trigorin took some minutes to assimilate it. Then he said:

"And this Karindethal? How do we come there? By the road?"

"By the mountain railway," said Lewis. "It takes us up to the lake, where we get the little steamer across to Weissau. From there we drive four or five miles up the Karindethal to the foot of the pass. Then we get out and climb."

"Climb!" cried Trigorin, sweating a little at the mere thought of it. Lewis grinned and said with energy:

"Oh, yes. It's quite steep; several hundred feet. Too rough for driving."

"Ach! And our gepacks? We must carry them?"

"Quite so. I hope you travel light, for your own sake."

"And the train? When does it go, Mr. Dodd?"

"Oh, in about an hour. I'll meet you at the station. I have to go into the town to buy a . . . a razor." . . .

And Lewis made his escape, rather pleased to have got off so easily. Trigorin finished his breakfast and strolled out into the garden which was full of little tables under the chestnut trees. He sat down at one of them and began a letter to his wife, writing in French which was most commonly used in his household. He described his journey, as far as it had gone, and observed:

I sit here amid the most exquisite scenery. Spring has already come to this charming valley, and the meadows round me are full of . . .

He had a look at the meadows round him, but could not determine what it was that filled them. There were a lot of blue flowers and some yellow, but as these were neither camelias nor gardenias he could not put a name to them. He compromised:

. . . full of a thousand blossoms of every colour.

With an oath he brushed a chestnut flower off his page. They drifted down everywhere, settling on his straight, up-standing hair and on the backs of the hens pecking about in the grass. They were a plague. He continued to write:

Around me, on every side, rise the mountains, still crowned with winter. Behind these grim ramparts, nursing his genius in solitary grandeur, dwells The Master. I go to him by the train in an hour's time.

He knew that his wife would not really find this very interesting. But he was suffering from such an *épanchement de cœur* that he had to write it all to somebody and there was no one else. He described his meeting with young Dodd:

Need I tell you that something in the air of this savage youth immediately attracted my attention? I studied him secretly, as yet unaware of his identity. "Here," I said, "is

genius! I divine it in every gesture." Presently he introduces himself in his simple English way. He is Lewis Dodd!

At that moment the savage youth himself strolled round the corner of the house. Catching sight of Trigorin he retreated hastily and went to talk to a man who was watching a cow graze in a field. He was less afraid of this kind of person than of any other, and was almost affable to it. The conversation lasted until it was time to catch the train.

Trigorin was a little surprised that any gentleman should desert him for a cowherd, but he was not resentful, since this was Lewis Dodd and The Great have queer ways. He wrote:

Lewis Dodd travels like one of the people, his knapsack on his back. He is even now talking to a poor peasant with the greatest cordiality. With me, I must confess, he was a little abrupt (*un peu bourru*), but I set it down to nervous sensibility. I did not let it trouble me.

This was a good thing since Lewis was not the first of his kind to snub Mr. Trigorin. They often did. But he did not deserve it. Indeed, he merited their pity, if all were known.

He had entertained in his early youth an ardent desire to compose music. He could imagine no keener joy. But his gifts were not upon a scale with his ambitions. He could write nothing that was at all worth listening to, and, being cursed with unusual intelligence, he knew it. So he gave it up and took to arranging ballets, a business at which, almost against his will, he was eminently successful. He had a choreographic talent which hardly fell short of genius, and which was at first something of a consolation to him; though it was poignant work interpreting the music of other men. Falling in with La Zhigalova he designed for her a series of surpassingly beautiful ballets. She was a fine dancer, but no artist, and it was he who discovered to her the full possibilities of her own person and talents. Out of gratitude she

married him, a little to his astonishment, and secured his services for life.

While thus saddled with a profession which he had not entirely chosen, Trigorin still thought sadly sometimes of his dead hopes, worshipped his flame in secret, revered deeply all composers who came in his way, and persisted in seeking the company of musicianly people. Unfortunately they seldom took to him, regarding him as something of a mountebank and undeniably vulgar. They were deceived by his air of metropolitan prosperity; he looked too much like the proprietor of an Opera House. They could not see into the humble, disappointed heart beneath his magnificent waistcoats, or guess how sacred was the very name of music in his ears. Moreover, he was never at his best in their company; he lost all his impressive urbanity in his eagerness to be liked, talked too much, and, betrayed by his ardent heart, often appeared ridiculous.

Sanger, however, had reason to be grateful to him. They had met in Prague, in the preceding autumn, while the composer was staging his opera "Akbar" and driven to the verge of insanity by the stupidity of producers. He confided his difficulties to Trigorin. He had intended to present the dawn of Eastern history, young, primitive, and heroic, in contrast to the splendour of its mysterious decay. Nobody could be made to see this; the ballets were languid and decadent with a stale aroma of the Arabian Nights. Conventional odalisques were introduced everywhere, even into his spirited hunting scenes. Could Trigorin help him? Trigorin could. He designed dances and a *décor* which caught that inflection of buoyancy suggested by the music. Sanger was charmed. He borrowed fifty pounds from his new friend and invited him to the Karindethal next spring.

The delight of Trigorin was unbounded. This was the first advance ever made to him by a composer of importance.



He accepted in a passion of gratitude. When the spring came he had some difficulty in persuading his wife that he must be allowed to go, for she rated musicians a little lower than dressmakers. She would only permit it on condition that he would make Sanger write a ballet for her. Though doubtful of his ability to make such a request, he was so anxious to go that he was really ready to promise anything. He now added a postscript to his letter:

Rest assured, my angel, that I am not forgetting your ballet. But it is better that I do not immediately importune Mr. Sanger with these requests. It is not that I forget but that I am tactful.

## CHAPTER II

LEWIS found the journey up to Weissau better than he had expected. His companion was indeed horribly talkative, making intelligent comments upon the grandeur of the scenery all the way, but in the choice of his topics he showed a certain respect for Mr. Dodd's nervous sensibility. They agreed that the chestnut and oak of the valley had now given way to pine woods, and discussed the names of some of the peaks towering above them. As the little train panted its way into the Alpine pastures, Lewis was even so affable as to point out several waterfalls to his companion.

After a stiff ascent the line ended by a lake and they found a little steamer waiting for them. Mr. Trigorin said that the expanse of water lent an agreeable perspective to the mountains rising sharply on the other side. Mr. Dodd said that it was so, and that when they got across they would find the same thing to be true of the mountains on this side. Mr. Trigorin said he supposed so, and became a little silent and unhappy. They crossed the lake without further conversation.

When they had almost reached the hamlet of Weissau, Lewis exclaimed suddenly:

"There they are, some of them!"

"Please?" said Trigorin anxiously.

"Two of Sanger's children. On the landing-stage."

He pointed to the little group of peasants waiting for the boat. Two young girls, standing rather apart from the crowd, had already recognized him and were waving ve-

hemently. As soon as he got off the boat they flung themselves upon his neck, kissing him with eager delight.

"Oh, Lewis!" exclaimed the smaller. "We never expected to see you at all. Only someone is probably coming by this boat so we thought we'd come in and buy some sweets and get a ride back."

"Yes," said the other. "Sanger got a letter to say this person was coming. And you should hear how he goes on about it. He says he never . . ."

"I expect it was Trigorin," interrupted Lewis.

"O—oh, yes! That was the name Sanger said, wasn't it, Lina?"

"Well, then, this is your man. Mr. Trigorin. Miss Teresa Sanger; Miss Paulina Sanger."

Trigorin put down his suitcases and bowed low, beginning:

"I am most delighted . . ."

But Teresa cut him short.

"Lewis? Have you got . . . you know what?"

"What? Oh, I know. Yes. I have it in my knapsack."

"That's all right. We'd have lynched you if you'd forgotten. But you've been the hell of a time fetching it. We've only got three days; his birthday's on Thursday. And he won't like it unless it's properly done."

"Three days will do if we work hard," Lewis assured her. "Look! Have you ordered a cart or anything? Because, if not, one of you must leg it up to the hotel and ask for one."

"Oh, we've got it. It's just behind the shop. It's got a pig in it that Kate told us to bring up. It's quite a quiet pig. It's dead."

Teresa looked at her sister and they both giggled.

"Can he eat bacon?" whispered Paulina in an audible aside, with a glance at Trigorin, who was waiting patiently beside his suitcases until somebody should take notice of him.

"He looks a little like a Jew. We had an awful time once when Ikey Mo's uncle was staying with us and we had nothing in the house . . ."

"If he can't eat bacon, there'll be nothing else for him to eat," said Teresa. She turned to Trigorin and enquired baldly: "Are you a Jew?"

"No," he said, a little stiffly. "I am from Russia."

"Well, there are Jews in Russia, aren't there?" she argued.

"They are not as I," Trigorin told her.

"Really?" she said derisively. "We've all got something to be thankful for, haven't we? You have got a lot of luggage. I hope there'll be room for us all in the cart as well as the pig."

"It's a very heavy pig," supplemented Paulina, exploding again into suppressed laughter. "Tessa and I had to drag it all the way from the slaughter-house."

They turned towards the little village shop which stood close to the landing-stage. Lewis walked in front with a girl hanging lovingly on either arm; Trigorin toiled in the rear with his suitcases. Behind the shop they found a very small carriage shaped something like a victoria, and, at the sight of it, the mirth of the children became almost hysterical. They had hoisted the gutted carcase of the pig into an upright position on the back seat. Draped in a tartan rug and crowned with Teresa's straw hat, it was a horrible object but not unlike a stout German lady, when seen from a distance. The children, who thought it irresistibly funny, demanded eagerly if Lewis did not see a resemblance to Fräulein Brandt, the celebrated contralto.

"Perhaps," said Lewis. "But do you expect us to sit on these cushions? They are all over pig."

"Your clothes won't spoil, darling Lewis."

"They are all I have, darling Tessa. And what about Trigorin? He's a gentleman."

"I shall go on high with the driver," stated the gentleman firmly.

"Then," said Paulina, "Lewis and Tessa can sit on the back seat, and I on Lewis's knee, and we'll put the suitcases in front of us with Fräulein Brandt on top."

With some difficulty they were all packed in, and the little cart started off up the valley at a great pace. Soon the village was left behind and their way lay through pine woods, along a rough green track. In front of them a straight wall of stony mountain shut out the sky, and they seemed to be driving to the very foot of the barrier.

Teresa and Paulina Sanger were at this time about fourteen and twelve years of age. They were the children of Sanger's second wife, who had been of gentle birth; from her they had inherited quick wits and considerable nervous instability. Both these qualities were betrayed in their eager, stammering speech and in the delicate impudence of their bearing. They had pale faces and small-boned, thin little bodies, fragile but intrepid. They had high, benevolent foreheads from which their long hair was pushed back and hung in an untended tangle down their backs. Teresa was the fairer and the plainer; her greenish eyes had in them a kind of secret hilarity as though she privately found life a very diverting affair. But she had begun lately to grow out of everything, especially jokes and clothes, and she really saw no prospect of getting new ones. Still, she laughed pretty often. Paulina was less inclined for compromise, a brilliant child, sometimes tempestuous, sometimes vividly gay, never sensible, and always incurably wild. She had an extravagant and untutored taste in dress, and wore on this occasion a ragged gown of a brilliant red and green tartan which she had somehow managed to acquire. It was much too long for her, so she had kilted it up at intervals with pins, and in front it hung in vast folds over her flat little chest, being cut

to fit a full bust. She used the space as a sort of pocket, stuffing in apples, sweets, and handkerchiefs, which gave her figure a very lumpy look. Teresa wore the peasant dress of the country: a yellow frock, brief and full, with a square-cut bodice and short sleeves. This she had touched up with a magenta apron. Both girls were barefoot. Both contrived to have, at unexpected moments and in spite of their rags, a certain arrogance of demeanour which proclaimed them the daughters of Evelyn Sanger, who had been a Churchill.

They chattered incessantly all the way up the valley, and Paulina, producing peppermints from the bosom of her bright gown, refreshed the whole party, including Trigorin on the box.

"You heard about Sebastian getting lost on the way up?" she said. "You know at the place where he got left behind he met some Americans. And he told them he'd been kidnapped by anarchists and that he was really a Russian prince. I don't expect they believed him. But they liked him. He said they kept telling each other how cute he was. They brought him on with them to Innsbruck, and he had a lovely time stopping with them at their hotel. When he got tired of it, he went to the manager of the Opera House, who's a friend of Sanger's, and borrowed enough money to get on here."

"And what did the Americans say?"

"Oh, he left a note behind to say he'd made a mistake about who he was, but he'd had a blow on the head when quite a child which confused his memory. He said it had come to him all of a sudden that he was the son of Albert Sanger, and that he'd gone home. By the way, you didn't see Tony anywhere in the town, did you?"

"Antonia? No, I didn't. Is she there?"

"We don't know where she is," said Teresa. "She's been gone nearly a week now. She left a note to say she was

going to stay a bit with a friend, but she'd be back for Sanger's birthday."

"We can't think what friend she can have gone to," added Paulina. "Sanger is quite annoyed about it. He says he'll belt her soundly when she gets back."

"And Linda says that if Tony gets into the habit of going off like this, it's odds she'll be bringing him home a grandchild one of these days," pursued Teresa. "And Sanger says she can take herself off for good if she does as there's quite enough to support in our family as it is."

"He doesn't mean half he says," commented Lewis.

"I know," said Teresa, in a slightly lower voice. "He says he won't stir out of his room while that fellow up there," she nodded at Trigorin's broad back, "is in the house. He says that he never thought the fool would be such a fool as to come."

"Linda may like to talk to him," suggested Lewis.

"I do hope she won't," whispered Teresa. "Because that might make him stay. But if nobody takes any notice of him he might go away pretty soon. Why ever did Sanger invite him?"

"Oh, you know what he is! He'd invite the Pope if he met him after dinner."

"Yes, I know. But the Pope wouldn't come."

"What is this guy, anyway?" asked Paulina.

"He dances in a ballet," Lewis told them.

This they took as a tremendous joke, but he assured them with gravity that it was so.

"Well! I've heard of dancing elephants," declared Paulina at last.

She poked Trigorin in the back and he turned round, smiling benignant down at her.

"He says," she pointed at Lewis, "he says that you dance in a ballet. Do you?"

"Ach no! I cannot dance."

Both children turned indignantly on Lewis, crying:

"Liar!"

But he, quite unabashed, declared that he had confused Trigorin with La Zhigalova, conveying an impression that Sanger's unwelcome guest had been invited solely upon her account and could lay no other claim to distinction. Trigorin said nothing and turned away from the group in the carriage, not without a certain grotesque dignity. The children, aware that Lewis had scored in some way, and regarding this as the first step in the routing of an interloper, exchanged gleeful glances. Teresa's mirth, however, was a little forced; she found herself wishing, absurdly, that Lewis had been kind to the poor fat person on the box. As if Lewis was ever kind to anybody!

With a sudden spasm of alarm she stole a look at him, and saw that he was smiling sleepily to himself. Paulina, tranquilly sucking a peppermint lozenge, was curled up on his knee. Thus often, in thoughtless security, had Teresa sat, when she was a little girl; when, with a child's hardness, she found his cruelty funny and saw nothing sinister in his perversities.

Now she was afraid of him, apprehending dimly all that he might have it in his power to make her feel. And yet she loved him very completely—better than any one else in the whole world. An odd state of things! She was inclined to regard these uneasy qualms as peculiar to her age, like the frequent growing pains in her legs which made her quite lame sometimes.

They drove out of the pine woods into an open meadow which formed the end of the valley. It was an almost circular space of short grass enamelled all over with little brilliant flowers. Many cows strayed across it, and the clear, sunny spaces were full of the music of their bells. An amphi-



theatre of mountains rose upon every side, shutting out the world behind stony walls. At the farther end of the meadow a low ridge with a faint bridle track zigzagging across it marked the pass.

The Karindehütte was just visible about halfway up; a long, low chalet built upon a flat shelf which caught more sun than fell to the share of the valley meadow.

They drew up at the foot of the pass beside a little group of herdsman's huts. Lewis and the girls jumped out at once and began to climb the mountain track, leaving Trigorin to pay for the carriage and arrange with a cowherd for the transport of his suitcases and the pig. He then followed pantingly, finding the sun very hot, his clothes very heavy and his boots very tight. As he toiled round each bend of the zigzag path he saw the others well in front of him, the little girls skipping over the rough stones on their hard bare feet, and Lewis swinging steadily forward with his knapsack hitched up on his shoulders. They got past the good shade of the trees into a region of scorching blue air where the wind blew warm upon them, smelling of myrtle and Alpine rose.

At length the party in front, rounding the last corner, reached the ledge of meadow where the Karindehütte was built. They paused for a moment to look over the valley and saw empty air in front of them, and, far below, the tops of trees and little cows and their carriage crawling back along the valley road. Cow bells rose very faintly like single drops of music distilled into this upper silence.

"I suppose," ventured Teresa, "that we ought to wait."

"He's getting very blown," said Lewis, going to the edge to look over at Trigorin on the path below.

Teresa halloed kindly to the labouring figure and told him that he was very nearly at the top. Her brother Sebastian, who had joined them from the house, added encouraging shouts and besought the stranger to take it easily.

"Is he this person Sanger said was coming?" he asked his sisters.

Teresa nodded.

"His name's Trigorin," she said.

Sebastian was the youngest of Evelyn Sanger's four children, and possessed the largest measure of good breeding. Though entirely graceless, he was often very gentlemanly in his manners. He was ten years old, but looked younger, being very small and fair, like his sister Teresa, with grave green eyes and a great mop of hair. He now thought it his duty to go down the hill a little way and welcome his father's guest.

"How do you do," he said politely. "We are all so pleased that you have been able to come."

Trigorin stopped and wiped his forehead with a silk handkerchief. He perceived that this courteous urchin must be another of Sanger's children. It looked more propitious than the other two.

"This hill," he gasped, "is terrible!"

"It's a bit steep when you aren't used to it," agreed Sebastian. "But we've got a nice view at the top. I'm afraid my sisters came up too fast for you. Women, you know," he added confidentially, "are inclined to run up hills. I've noticed it."

When they reached the level sward where the others waited for them he handed the guest over to his sisters with a great air, explaining:

"I'm afraid I can't come in just now. I have an engagement with this fellow."

And he pointed to a small peasant boy, rather younger than himself, who had been lurking in the shadow of the house. It appeared that they were going to look at some badger holes and the girls immediately demanded to be taken too. All the children set off hastily down the hill again, leaving

Lewis and Trigorin alone on the Karinde Alp. Lewis said sulkily:

"Well, I suppose we'd better go in, as there seems to be no one about."

They went round to the front of the house, which had a long veranda looking over the valley. Here they came upon a massive but very beautiful woman fast asleep in a hammock.

"Madame," murmured Lewis, and they stood looking at her, uncertain what to do.

Linda Cowlard, for she had no real right to Sanger's name, was an exceptionally lovely creature, a vast dazzling blonde. Her origins were obscure, but it was believed that she had once been the daughter of a tobacconist at Ipswich. She had a magnificent constitution, no nerves, and very few ideas; was, indeed, splendidly stupid. Sanger could not have found a more suitable companion. She had lived with him for eight years and showed, as yet, no signs of exhaustion. Her placid animal poise was, if anything, nourished by his insane jealousy and the violent quarrels which occasionally broke out between them. She was incapable of sustaining any severe shock, having the rudimentary nervous organization which relieves itself in distress by loud, immediate outcries. Her indolence was terrific; she lay dozing all day and seldom finished her toilet before the afternoon. The management of the house she left to Sanger's daughters.

One child of her own she had, a little girl of seven years, whom Sanger had insisted upon calling Susan. Linda had modified this to Suzanne as being less common. The rest of the family derisively nicknamed their sister "Soozanne" in order to show their contempt for her. It was a wholesome, plebeian-looking brat, pink and formless as a wax doll, garnished about the head with tight clusters of yellow curls. Linda was very fond of it, dressed it in white

with pink ribbons, and defended it sourly against the animosity of Sanger, who declared that Susan was a posturing little monkey and should have been trained for a tight-rope dancer. The child did, in fact, look something of a stranger among the others; her healthy inferiority especially distinguished her beside the brood of the ill-starred Evelyn, with their intermittent manifestations of intelligence and race.

The two young men looked at Linda and listened to a series of repeated hoots, going on inside the house, which Lewis identified as Kate practising her head notes. A full morning sun blazed upon the woman in the hammock but could hardly outshine her beauty. She wore a white dressing-gown, flung carelessly about her, and beneath it some flimsy under-garment all lace and ribbons. Trigorin, always susceptible, gaped at her, his eyes nearly popping out of his head. Her superb bulk was entirely to his taste, but he had not expected somehow to find anything like her at the Karin-dehütte. Part of his nature resented her intrusion there, he suspected that she might disturb him when he wanted to talk about music to Sanger. Still he could not but feel that she was the most desirable woman he had ever set eyes on.

Lewis also stared down at her, with a wry smile, as if he had swallowed vinegar. Then he looked away, looked at the blue static mountains across the valley, and looked back again at Sanger's mistress, and finally, catching sight of the perspiring Trigorin, burst into loud laughter.

Linda opened her eyes, which were the colour of the gentians in the grass. She yawned, stretched her supple limbs like a large cat, and sat up.

"If it isn't Lewis," she exclaimed. "Well, you are a stranger. Albert never said you were coming. Have you brought a friend?"

The blue eyes slid round to Trigorin.

"Mr. Trigorin, Mrs. Sanger," muttered Lewis.

"Pleased to meet you," said Linda, offering a large cold hand. "We knew you were coming. Kate's been getting a room ready. Sit down, won't you, Mr. Trigorin. And you, too, Lewis."

They sat down and she took leisurely stock of the stranger. Usually she found the Karindehütte very dull. Albert's guests were not always amusing. Too often they were like Lewis, whom she detested. This one, however, might have possibilities. He wore expensive clothes and his bulging eyes proclaimed him a conquest. She began, in her sleepy voice, to make remarks to him, punctuated by slow, evasive smiles. Trigorin, lost in the flame of those blue eyes, stammered replies in English which emotion had made almost unintelligible. He was as helpless as a swimmer swept away in a strong current. Lewis, nursing his knapsack on his knee, observed them and smiled to himself. Occasionally he got from the lady a glance which was by no means friendly and which hinted that he might remove himself.

She had not always disliked him so bitterly. Once, some years ago, she had felt very kindly towards him and as good as told him so. But he, in spite of her conspicuous attractions, of which he was fully sensible, rejected her advances with some brutality. He did not think her worth a breach with Sanger. She concealed her fury as best she could and continued to treat him civilly, at least in public, in the hope that Sanger might one day become jealous and forbid him the house. Sanger saw through her manoeuvres and, in his turn, did not consider her worth a quarrel with Lewis, whom he valued beyond any woman in the world. But she persisted in the stratagem, being too stupid to devise any other method of attack.

Presently Lewis bethought himself that he had better see Kate soon, if he wished to secure a bedroom to himself. He got up and was moving into the house when Linda called to him, over her shoulder:

"Oh, Lewis!"

He waited.

"You didn't see Antonier anywhere on the way up, did you?"

"No."

"God knows where she can have got to," piously commented Linda. "Albert seems to think it's my fault, if you please! I tell him if he wants those girls looked after he'd better put them to school somewhere. Not that any decent school would keep them a week; but that's another matter."

"A young lady is lost?" enquired Trigorin, who was a little fogged. "One of your family?"

"One of Albert's children," replied the lady. "Not mine, you'll please to remember, Mr. Trigorin."

"She'll turn up," said Lewis at the door. "These children all fall on their feet. Look at Sebastian!"

"She's not a child; that's just where it is. She's sixteen past," retorted Linda, adding ruminatively: "Dirty little cat!"

Lewis left them and went into the large open hall which served the family as dining room. Through it a door led into the music room, an almost empty chamber with a dais at one end and a grand piano. Here Kate stood before an open window, her hands held out before her and lightly clasped, while she took in deep breaths and let them out in long, high notes. They were full, clear, honest notes, very like Kate herself, who was the most honest thing alive. Her mother, Sanger's first wife, had been Australian—clean, respectable, middle class, hard working and kind. Kate persisted in being all these things, in spite of her upbringing.

She had none of the wildness of her half-brothers and sisters. She had rosy cheeks and neat brown hair, was trim and comely, and wore shirt blouses. Her voice was promising and she worked strenuously, hoping, with her father's backing, to succeed some day upon the operatic stage. She also ran the household and did all the work which the single manservant could not do. Every one respected and liked her. She was a little obtuse, but this was probably the salvation of her, since it enabled her to disregard the inconsistencies of her own life. A more perceptive young woman could hardly have gone on being so modest, sensible, and affectionate without a little encouragement from her surroundings.

Lewis listened for a few seconds and called down the room: "Very nice indeed, Kate."

"Oh, it's you? We'd given up expecting you. Have you got the thing for us to act on Father's birthday?"

Kate and her brother Caryl gave their father his proper title. It was only Evelyn's children who referred to him carelessly as Sanger.

"I finished it this morning," said Lewis. "We can begin rehearsing after lunch."

"But the tiresome thing is that we can't begin without Tony, and we don't know where she is. Didn't you hear?"

"I heard she was off somewhere."

"I hope she's all right," observed Kate, looking anxious. "I don't like it. You know, she's awfully silly sometimes."

Lewis did know, and secretly thought that Antonia was bound to get into a scrape sooner or later. But he did not wish to distress Kate by saying so, and, to change the topic, remarked:

"By the way, I brought a fat Russian ballet dancer up with me. I picked him up in the inn at Erfurt."

"Mr. Trigorin? Yes, I know. Father invited him in the

way he does, you know. I do hope he'll be civil to him. He's so furious with him for coming. He couldn't remember who he was at first, when we got the letter. Where is he now?"

"On the veranda."

"Oh! Is Linda there?"

"Yes."

"Oh."

Kate grew pink, but all she said was:

"Then I needn't bother about him. What is he like?"

"He looks," said Lewis viciously, "like one of those men who exhibit performing fleas. And that's all he is; on a wider scale, of course. He's done well out of it. Linda likes his clothes."

"Oh, dear! Perhaps he won't stay long! Father is fearfully busy writing a new last act to 'The Mountains.' Often he's up all night and Caryl, too. Caryl's had to put all his own work aside, poor dear. And the worst of it is, Father's too ill to be working at all. I'm sure he is, and so is Caryl. You'll be shocked when you see him. He looks all wasted and shrunken up sometimes, and his eyes so yellow and bloodshot. He gets queer, giddy turns, but he says it's only because he's thirsty!"

"Can't you make him see a doctor?" asked Lewis anxiously.

"No. He says perhaps he will when we leave here, if he isn't better. He's very difficult. Men are really perfectly impossible sometimes."

"Yes, aren't they? I quite agree. But look here! Where am I going to sleep? Who else is here?"

"Nobody. But the family is spread all over the house, and Father turned Linda out of his room the other night and said she could go and sleep by herself until he had finished 'The Mountains.' I've put Mr. Trigorin in the spare room. Of course it's got two beds in it . . ."



"No, Kate. I'll sleep on the doorstep, but not with the flea trainer. Is there nowhere else?"

"Well, there's the little room in the annexe. It's very small and it's never been disinfected since Tony and Tessa had scarlet fever there two years ago. I meant to burn a sulphur candle but I forgot. Do you mind?"

"Not a bit. Germs are better than Trigorin any day."

"And it's tiresome going out there if it rains. However, if you don't mind. . . . Let's go across and have a look at it."

They went out and climbed the hill at the back, a little way to a second hut. The lower part was used as a storehouse and the two bedrooms above were reached by an outer stair and balcony. Kate led him into a tiny room with two camp-beds in it and nothing else. Floor, walls, and ceiling were of wooden planks and smelt of the forest. A dusty rosary hung from a nail by the door and the walls above the beds were covered with childish writing, for Teresa and Antonia had enlivened their scarlet fever by scribbling rude remarks about each other. Kate glanced at them and blushed. She did not like to think of Lewis reading these sisterly pleasantries, and determined to send Caryl at the first opportunity with a plane to plane them off.

"This is very nice and quiet," said Lewis.

"Of course it is that," agreed Kate. "I'll bring in Roberto's chair and table. Come and help me fetch them."

They went into the larger room next door which belonged to Roberto, the Italian manservant. It had a bed, a table, a chair, and a yellow tin trunk. On the trunk lay Roberto's bowler hat, and on the chair, a cherished testimony to his peasant blood, Roberto's umbrella, which, on the finest Sundays, went to Mass with him.

"I don't see why we should take the poor fellow's only chair," observed Lewis.

"Oh, he doesn't sit on it. He has no time to sit. He only uses it for keeping his umbrella on. We always take it if we want it."

They carried the furniture next door and Kate made up the least rickety of the camp-beds, saying:

"You can use the other for putting things down on. Is that all, Lewis? Then I'll be off as I've a lot to do. Father often has his meals upstairs, which gives extra trouble. You're quite fixed? *Mittagsessen* will be . . . when I've cooked it . . . soon . . ."

She gave him an amiable smile and ran off. She was the only person in the family who had no positive feelings, one way or the other, towards Lewis. She just regarded him as one of the many people who depended upon her for comfort. He, for his part, liked her very much, was grateful to her, and was generally both obliging and civil in his dealings with her. She let him alone, and that was a thing which very few women could do, seemingly, in spite of his plain face and unmannerly ways.

When she was gone he threw himself down upon the newly made bed and pulled from his knapsack the MS. score of a one-act opera called "Breakfast with the Borgias," which he had promised the Sanger children to write for their father's birthday. It was to be acted by the family, who could most of them sing in tune, and by any guests who happened to be about. He began to read it through, correcting it in places with a stubby pencil, and writing in fragments of libretto as a guide to the performers, who were to compose their own words when they had learnt their tunes and got the hang of the plot.

Presently he let the music slip to the ground and lay back on the hard little bed, smoking and dreaming. Through the window he could see the cloudless sky and a piece of bright pink mountain. Very far off a cow bell tinkled drowsily

and he meditated upon the peculiar unearthly quality of a sound that comes up from below. He felt so tremendously high up; almost halfway to heaven. Turning his head to the wall he read:

“My sister Teresa is a little . . . ” .

And a half-hearted attempt at erasure, as though even Antonia could occasionally feel ashamed of herself.

### CHAPTER III

IN SPITE of Sanger's contempt for England, the mothers of the children at the Karindehütte had all been British. Vera Brady, his first wife, had been the leading lady of a third-rate opera company of which he was *chef d'orchestre*. He was then quite a young man and remarkably unsuccessful. They had gone on tour in the Antipodes, were married at Honolulu, and knocked about the world together for a good many years. She was an excellent woman, with a fine voice, and extreme powers of endurance; her devotion to Sanger kept her beside him through misfortune, hardship, and neglect. Of her children none survived their precarious infancy save the two youngest. These were born during a period of comparative prosperity when Sanger, who had begun to attract attention, held for a short time a permanent post in a German town with a famous conservatorium. Vera was able to quit the stage and set up the respectable household for which she had always craved. All her instincts were domestic and she was very happy for a time, bustling round her little flat and passing the time of day with congenial housewives at church and market. Caryl was born and she was able to rear him in peace and decency. She believed that her other children had died because she had been forced to work so hard in those nightmare years, when she had nursed her babies hastily, in draughty dressing-rooms, awaiting her call. Caryl lived, and grew plump and strong, and was a comfort to her.

This interlude was brief; new troubles soon gathered round her. Sanger's infidelities had become almost a common-

place in their wandering life, but she had always been able to fly from gossip and at least she was sure that each episode must be brief. Once or twice he had run away from her, but he always came back. Now that she was planted in one town she could no longer ignore the scandalous legends which collected round his name. It was hinted to her that the place would soon be too hot to hold him, and though she persistently shut her eyes and ears she could not help knowing all about Miss Evelyn Churchill. The entire district was ringing with it.

This young lady was Sanger's pupil. She had come from England to study music and report had it that she was of very good family. She was talented, beautiful, and Sanger's junior by twenty years, but she had lost her head and her heart and she was advertising the fact in the high-handed way peculiar to women of breeding who are bent upon flying in the face of accepted convention. The affair became an open scandal and the Churchill family threatened to come to Germany and stop it. The young lady replied by going to Venice, taking Sanger with her.

Poor Vera, brooding in the little home where she had expected to be so happy, began to decide that life was altogether too hard for her. She was not proof against this last blow. Sanger's women were not, usually, of a calibre to occupy him for long, but Miss Churchill was a rival of a different order. She was exceptionally intelligent, her health and beauty were not impaired by long years of hardship, and she loved him to distraction. With such a mistress he had no further need for Vera, and the thought broke a heart which should by rights have cracked some fifteen years before.

Yet he did come back, upon the day that Kate was born. He had left a number of manuscripts in his wife's keeping and wanted to collect them from her. She told him, not unkindly, that she was dying, and it soon became clear

that she spoke the truth. Her constitution had been undermined by past privations; she had made up her mind, fatally, that she should not survive the birth of her baby. She spoke of Evelyn without rancour.

"That young lady," she said, "will you marry her when I'm gone?"

Sanger, looking rather foolish, said he did not know.

"Well, then don't, Albert," whispered Vera. "Promise me that you won't now!"

"All right," he said agreeably.

"I've never known you keep a promise yet," the tired voice toiled on, "but I'm glad to hear you say it. Not that she wouldn't be good to my babies; I feel somehow that she would, which is more than I'd say of many women. But she's no wife for you, Albert. She's been bred soft, poor thing! And I don't wish her harm. I forgive her. I'd be sorry to think she should come to any harm. Mind you're not to marry her, Albert."

The good creature died and Albert immediately broke his promise. He married Miss Churchill in a very few weeks in consequence of a certain pressure from her brothers, who had come out to put an end to the affair and who stayed to pay Sanger's debts and hurry up the wedding.

Evelyn, whose chief merit was a kind of reckless generosity, readily undertook the charge of Caryl and Kate and continued to love them when her own children came. She was indeed heard to regret that she could not pass off Antonia and Kate as twins; the six months which divided them made it just not possible, and strangers asked so many questions and were so stupidly slow in grasping things, that it would have been convenient. This was how she faced life in those early days—meeting her problems with an audacious levity. Sanger had lost his work, but they had not yet got through all her money.

In the course of time she stopped making jokes. Her lot was the harder because she had been, as Vera put it, bred soft. But she met odds with an uncomplaining courage and always recognized that she had only herself to blame for the dishonour, poverty, and pain which were her fate. In a multitude of disasters she revealed a constant fortitude, and to the end, though a little battered by ill-fortune, she never quite lost the carriage of a gentlewoman. After bearing four children in six years she contracted heart disease and died rather suddenly upon the eve of her thirtieth birthday.

The household entered thereafter upon a period of storms and changes until Sanger fell in with Linda, who looked like a permanency. She had the strength of mind to ignore completely her six step-children, and for Caryl she even entertained a vague sort of affection. He had grown up into a handsome boy, very like his mother and sister in temper and complexion. His disposition was excellent; from an early age he managed all his father's business and financial affairs, kept him out of debt as far as possible, and transcribed his manuscripts. In his rare intervals of leisure he wrote music on his own account, but very little attention was paid by the family to his career. He and Kate propped up the crazy household between them and were privately agreed as to its dreadfulness. Linda was grateful to them and tolerated the others.

Lately, however, a new cause for disturbance had arisen. Linda had begun to feel aggrieved at the ripening beauty of Antonia and disliked having to go about with her. This eldest of Evelyn's children was by far the most handsome; she was born before retribution had fully overtaken her mother, and did not look as delicate as the rest. She was full of a changeful colour and brilliance, though her bloom was but just beginning and she had still the colt-like movements, the long limbs and loose joints of a very young

creature. To the experienced eye her promise was infinite. She had a lovely vivid little face, with strange grayish eyes, silky brows, and a white forehead. Her mouth was childish and unformed, but the long curve of cheek and chin, the tilt of the nostrils, and the smooth modelling of the temples revealed a finely constructed skull, a beauty which was bone deep and which would survive the loss of youth. In character she also resembled her mother: was unbalanced, proud, and at times impossibly generous. But she lacked Evelyn's courage and was reckless rather than intrepid. She could only take a risk by deceiving herself as to its issue, and confronted by a reality she always went to pieces. She cried when she could not get what she wanted, boasted when she was frightened, and was, like her sisters, a deplorable little slattern.

She turned up at the Karindehütte on the afternoon of Trigorin's arrival in a very uncertain state of mind, having been absent for a week. Unsure of the attitude of her family, she would not go in by the veranda for fear of meeting Linda. She slipped round to the back of the house and climbed through a window into the music room, where she found Teresa and Paulina sitting on the dais step and devouring cherries. Immediately she put on a kind of defensive swagger and strolled carelessly across the room as though she had never been away at all. Her sisters opened their eyes very wide indeed and asked where she had been.

To give herself time she sat down beside them, snatched a handful of cherries from the basket, and stuffed them into her mouth. Then she mumbled:

"Oh . . . in München."

"München," cried the others. "Who on earth did you stay with?"

She spat out her stones and would not answer; but, when they asked incredulously whether it was Ikey Mo, she nodded.



"*Himmel!*" gasped Teresa and Paulina together.

They referred to a young man, a friend of Sanger's, whose real name was Jacob Birnbaum, but whom they had christened Ikey Mo on account of his nose and his shin bones. To this nickname he had not submitted with the best grace in the world. He was, for reasons of his own, naturalized a British subject; he dressed like an American, and talked four languages correctly but without much command of idiom. He belonged to an immensely rich family and had no regular profession, though he dabbled a good deal in finance. The reigning interest in his life was music; he sometimes acted as a sort of *entrepreneur* in the arts, financing genius if he thought it would repay him. It nearly always did, for his admirable taste was supplemented by the sharp, forcible intelligence of his race.

His connection with Sanger, however, had brought him no financial profit; he had even lost money over his friend's productions and he was quite content to do so. For he had his ideals. He almost worshipped Sanger; regarded him as the greatest musician of the century—as one of those magnificent, unique figures which do not inspire every generation.

In appearance he was not pretty, being short, fair, and very stout. But he had benevolent little eyes, and a fine, thoughtful forehead. The Sanger children knew him very well, for he had a flat in Munich and often came up to the Karindehütte. Also he had spent part of the spring with them in Italy, giving Sanger advice about some copyrights. Teresa, casting her mind back, remembered that he had looked a good deal at Antonia, as he sat entertaining Linda in their Genoese garden.

Paulina was asking:

"Did you have a good time?"

"O—oh, yes! A lovely time! Anything I said I wanted.

Ike got it for me at once. He just gave me anything I asked for. We used to go along the street and look at all the shops, and if we came to a flower shop he took me in and ordered all I wanted. And once in a sweet shop there was a basket in the window, all made of chocolate with marzipan fruits and gold ribbons; and I said I'd like that. And he said all right, and got it. And then, just to have him on, I said I wanted an enormous wedding cake in three tiers. But he said: 'Oh, if you want it you can have it. It will be very . . .'"

She broke off and bit her lip.

"Did you bring any sweets back with you, Tony?" asked Paulina eagerly.

"Little greedy! No! I ate so many I got sick. So I gave them all to some children in the cellars. But Ike would have given me more if I'd wanted. He'd have given me anything. And we had lovely meals; sometimes in restaurants and sometimes sent in. Last night we had a *vol-au-vent*, and asparagus, and lobsters, and an iced bomb and peaches, and Ike had a saddle of mutton as well. And we had champagne. I was drunk every night."

"Well, I don't wonder he's so fat if he eats all that," jeered Teresa.

"That's what I told him. I used to say, very loudly, in restaurants and places: 'Now I know why you are so fat.' And all the people laughed. I said it in every language I knew. He got quite annoyed. He doesn't like jokes about his figure."

"I wonder he kept you then," said Paulina.

"Well, I said to him: 'If you don't like what I say I'll go home. I can go this minute if I want to. Nobody can stop me.' So of course he had to put up with it."

"Did he give you that hat?"

Antonia wore the very ragged cotton gown in which she

had left her home. But she had acquired a fine, flimsy town hat made of black lace with a wreath of gold flowers.

"No," she said. "I bought it with my birthday money. Do you like it?"

"It's rather vulgar," said Teresa. "But it suits you."

Antonia took it off and pinched the tawdry flowers lovingly. Her sisters exclaimed in excitement:

"Why, you've got your hair up!"

"Yes," she said carelessly. "Ike said I'd better."

She had drawn it all off her forehead and pinned it at the back of her head. It was a style which revealed the subtle shadows and curves of brow and temple, giving her an appearance of character and intellect which the low-brimmed hat had destroyed. The calm, youthful beauty of her forehead contrasted strangely with the evasive defiance of her eyes, heavy with the weariness of a week's frantic dissipation. She sat for a while making nervous grimaces, and then announced:

"We went to the opera every night."

"Oh! Was it tolerable?" asked Teresa, with very faint imitation of Lewis in his least agreeable manner.

"Of course it was. It was very beautiful music. Only Ike has strange tastes. Just fancy! He likes Wagner! I told him that we don't. I said that all savage races like loud noises."

She paused to laugh heartily at this jibe, and Paulina asked in a puzzled voice:

"But what did he have you there for if you were so rude? I don't understand. What did he get out of it?"

"You'd never take him for a lover," cried Teresa; then, catching sight of her sister's face: "Oh, Tony! You didn't!"

"Yes, I did," said Antonia, adding hastily: "Do you know he says I've the loveliest voice he's ever heard in his life!"

He says I'm miles better than Kate; he says I've got more temperament than Kate and my interpretations are more sympathetic. So that's one for Kate, isn't it? Always stodging away! She'll never do anything very much, I expect."

"He was just making fun of you," said Teresa. "Or else he's as mad as you are. Because no sane man, even if he was your lover, could think that you sing better than Kate. But I wonder at your taste, Tony. He's so fat!"

"Why shouldn't he be? There isn't any law that the first lover anybody takes has to be thin, is there?"

"N—no," said Teresa with a rare blush. "You know you'll have a terrible time with Sanger. He said he'd beat you when you came back; and I don't know what he'll say when he hears what you've done. What will you tell him?"

"Nothing, or Linda either. I don't think he'll ask. He never asks questions unless he's sure he's going to like the answer."

This was true and the little girls nodded. She went on:

"I expect it will be all right. Ike came back with me, you know. He's up with Sanger now, and he brought him some cognac for a present. That ought to put him in a good temper. I advised him to bring it and he said it was a good idea, but he was still afraid that Caryl might call him out. So I said: 'Caryl never does silly things and that would be silly. Because if he started fighting over us his life wouldn't be worth a sick headache by the time Soo-zanne's grown up.' And Ike said that was probably true. I told him I didn't wonder he was frightened, for he'd make a splendid target. And Caryl's a good shot. If he fought anybody he'd kill them, I think. I shouldn't like poor little Ike to be killed. But I don't see why Caryl should mind, do you? It isn't as if I was likely to have a baby or anything."

They rather resented the swagger with which she made this assertion and Teresa said crushingly:

"Did you walk all about München with that enormous hole in your stocking? I wonder Ike put up with it!"

Antonia turned over her little foot and looked at it. Most of her pink heel stuck out of her stocking. She said instantly:

"Ike gave me stockings. He gave me twelve pair, all silk and all different colours."

"Fancy taking clothes from him!"

"I didn't. I threw them out of the window. I asked him what he took me for. And they all got caught in the telegraph wires, and the people in the street looked so surprised. It was windy, you know, and they waved about like little flags. I laughed till I nearly fell out of the window myself."

"Liar!"

"I did. It's true. I said to Ike: 'If I have a hole in my stocking, what's that to you? My clothes are my own affair, I should hope. If I'm not grand enough for you to take me out, leave me alone and I'll go home.' And he said I could throw them out of the window if I liked. So I threw them. And he said he didn't mind. He said he wouldn't mind if I threw all my clothes out of the window. He said . . ."

She pulled herself up with a little gasp as if she had again stumbled upon a recollection which terrified her. But she went on, boastfully elaborating the details of her escapade and heaping insults upon Birnbaum as though by abuse she could revenge the humiliations of her surrender. She seemed to be bent upon representing him in as ridiculous a light as possible, and Lewis, who joined them in time to hear some of her most highly coloured sallies, was struck by their apt cruelty—at the edge which this episode seemed to have put upon her somewhat primitive wit. He sat on the piano stool,

applauding her waggery and encouraging her to fresh efforts until something in her desperate spirits made him uneasy. He observed her more closely, got a glimpse of the disaster in her eyes, and laughed no more; turning round abruptly he began to play the piano and ended the conversation. The girls, immediately silent, listened to him with the grave attention which his music merited. He played sitting very stiff and upright, staring thoughtfully at the notes with a faint, preoccupied smile. The immobility of his body seemed to contribute somehow to the violent activity of his hands as he flung them about the keyboard. He had charged into the last movement in the *Appassionata*, and for some minutes the room was full of its resistless, onward sweep. Then he broke off, commanding Paulina, with some irritation, not to breathe down his neck.

"Finish it, Lewis," cried Antonia. "Play the Presto bit."

"I can't play that piece," he demurred. "It's too difficult."

"Oh, Lewis! How can you? I've often heard you."

"Well," said Teresa maliciously, "I must say I've heard it better done."

He spun round on the music stool as if somebody had stuck a pin into him, and looked at her. She gave him such an innocent little grin that he could not help laughing. He said that they had better lose no time in rehearsing "Breakfast with the Borgias," now that Antonia was back, and went off to fetch it. Paulina said:

"He didn't like you saying that you'd heard the *Appassionata* better done, Tessa."

"Well, he shouldn't have said it was too difficult for him in that silly voice. It was just to show off. I can't help teasing him when he asks for it like that."

"I wish," said Antonia with a shiver, "that he wouldn't

look at a person as if he saw all in one second everything that had ever happened to them."

"It doesn't matter," stated Teresa. "He only thinks of his own concerns. The other things he hastily forgets, so they sha'n't get on his mind."

Lewis reappeared with the score, which he propped up on the piano, saying:

"Now I propose to play over the tunes to you until you know them and you can supply your own words. Who will be Cesare Borgia? He's a tenor."

"Roberto," said Paulina. "He's got the best voice here."

"And Ikey Mo must be Pope," broke in Antonia. "It will suit him so very well."

"Oh! He's here, is he?" asked Lewis.

"Upstairs with Sanger."

"Good! He can double the parts of Pope and Friar. They don't come on together. Then the flea trainer . . . what's his name . . . Linda's follower . . . Trigorin . . . he can be the servant, Scaramello. It'll be just the part for him. He has a good deal of business with a poisoned toothpick. Just fetch him, Tessa! You'll find him, I expect, on the veranda. And you, Lina, produce Roberto for me."

Teresa ran out and found Trigorin engaged in desultory conversation with Linda. He was looking a trifle crestfallen and uneasy; he had been disappointed not to see Sanger at lunch. Lewis and Kate had discussed "The Mountains" across him, without taking any notice of his attempts to join in. Their conversation reminded him of all his joyful anticipations as he drove up the valley and roused him from the brief delirium occasioned by Linda's blue eyes. He had not climbed this heavy hill merely to make himself agreeable to a fine woman. She would be very well anywhere else, but here she was not seemly, and to become entangled with her

would be to profane the dreams which he had woven about this visit. She found him much less promising after lunch.

He jumped up with alacrity when he heard that Lewis wanted him and followed Teresa as she skipped back into the house. He was radiantly at their service, but his face fell when he heard that they wanted him to sing.

"It is impossible," he exclaimed. "I cannot sing."

"Everybody has got to," said Lewis. "You needn't be a Caruso. No! None of your modesty! Here, sing this!"

He played the opening bars of Scaramello's song. Trigorin stood, fat and mute, spreading out hands of deprecation.

"I cannot," he repeated.

"Sing this then," commanded Lewis, playing the first bar.

Trigorin produced a voice so small and reedy that Teresa and Paulina rolled on the floor with laughter.

"No, you're quite right, you can't sing," said Lewis crossly.

"But who is to take the part then?"

"I could play?" suggested Trigorin diffidently. "Then you, perhaps, shall sing."

"Play? I doubt it. It's all in pencil and vilely written at that. It would be sheer guess work."

"To me it will be clear," Trigorin assured him. "Often I must read such scores."

And, sitting down, he began to play the little overture with great smoothness and spirit, interpreting the scrawls which stood for chords without much difficulty. Lewis listened impatiently and then said:

"Yes, that'll do. But don't play it as if it was Chopin!"

Trigorin began to play much louder, as the only amendment he could think of. Teresa, who had been admiring the excited agility of his fat hands, put an arm round Lewis's neck and drew his head close down to hers.



"Lewis," she whispered, derisively confidential, "sometimes, you know, you talk . . . poppycock!"

He pulled her ears and called her something unrepeatable, but he went over to Trigorin and told him how much obliged they all were for his timely skill in playing for them. Trigorin beamed and played louder than ever.

"Now," said Lewis. "I'll be Scaramello. So we needn't rehearse the opening song. Where's Roberto?"

"Please?" said Roberto, who had been waiting politely by the door until called for.

He was a small, thin Italian, clad invariably in blue liner overalls. He had a brown, good-natured face, with a little beard and moustache. He was devoted to all the Sangers. He did the whole work of the house and undertook any odd job that turned up, darned Sanger's socks, prepared Linda's bath, and interviewed the Press. Sanger asserted that he had once acted as accoucheur when Sebastian arrived rather unexpectedly into the world, but this was so long ago as to be almost legend.

"Listen, Roberto," said Lewis. "Can you act?"

"*Scusa!*"

"Which of you girls can talk Italian? Tony! You explain to him what he's got to do. You, Trigorin, play him his tune. Get him along to Lucrezia's entrance. It's marked on the score, there. Where's Kate? I want her. She must be Lucrezia."

"Oh, Lewis! Let me be!" cried Antonia. "Kate can't act."

"She can sing. I won't have my music spoilt. No, Tony."

He went to the door and shouted for Kate.

"But she'll ruin the part, Lewis."

"Not a bit of it."

"She can't interpret. She's got no temperament."

"All the better," said Lewis drily. "Temperament is like vinegar in a salad; a little goes a long way. I'd sooner have none than too much. Kate! Where are you?"

"Oh, Lewis, do let me be. I can sing! I can really! Everybody says I've come on a lot."

"They may, Tony. I don't say you sing badly. But Kate sings better."

"Oh, well, then! I hope she'll spoil your silly old play. Standing stuck in the middle of the stage looking like a sofa cushion like she always does. I never heard anything funnier in all my life than Kate trying to act Lucrezia Borgia."

"Birnbaum as Pope will be much funnier. No! Kate must be our diva. You must be her victim; a beautiful creature who is poisoned and dies writhing. You'll like that, won't you? You can work off a temperamental contrast to Kate's stolid villainy."

"Oh, well," said Antonia, somewhat mollified. "But what will Tessa and Lina be?"

"Tessa must be the confidential waiting maid and Lina and Sebastian are to be pages. They've a duct."

"And what about Suzanne? Had you forgotten her? Oh, that doesn't matter. We don't want her."

Lewis clapped a hand to his head in dismay and exclaimed:

"If I hadn't forgotten Soo-zanne. Will your father . . ."

"Sanger won't mind her being left out," Paulina assured him. "He nearly is sick when she sings and so are we."

"Very well. There isn't time to alter it, anyhow. Kate!"

"She cook supper," volunteered Roberto. "She say she come after or you get nothing to eat."

"What a plague! Well, I'll take her later, and Caryl, too. He is our heavy bass. We must do what we can now without them. Come, Tessa! You and I have a love scene together.

If you'll come down to the end of the room with me I'll hum you the tune and we'll concoct the words, while Trigorin coaches Roberto."

They went and sat in a distant window, composing their libretto with a good deal of hilarity. She supplied the rhymes, while he attended to the metre, and they soon became very ribald indeed. Presently Roberto, who was getting hold of his part, struck a tremendous attitude and burst into his first air. As he sang he stalked about the stage with fiery Italian gestures.

"There," said Lewis. "That is exactly what I want. You will all of you observe that this is a very Latin piece. This fellow does it to perfection. Copy him and you'll please me. That'll do, Roberto. Up with you, Tessa, and we'll sing our duet."

They mounted the dais. Trigorin's hands softened on the keys as Teresa's little treble and Lewis's inconspicuous baritone rose through the room. Neither had much voice but they sang with spirit, and it was obvious that Teresa was straining to do her very best. In that house she could do no less. Music there was a sacred thing; perhaps the only sacred thing. Even in an absurd charade like this it might not be cheapened by carelessness or economy of effort. The Sanger children were ignorant of obedience, application, self-command, or reverence save in this one cause. And of Lewis the same thing might have been said.

He was looking wild and weary. His red hair, damp with sweat, was pushed up into a crest on the top of his head. He had flung aside all his waistcoats and the muffler and was directing the rehearsal in his shirt sleeves. Having Teresa in his arms, he was making love to her with a business-like competence which showed that he had quite forgotten for the moment who she really was. He was busy listening to the effect of the duet and considering the sequence of this song

with the next; in his preoccupation he hardly remembered that she was not the Roman waiting wench for whom he had written the part. His eyes were grave and intent, and saw nothing at all, but in voice and gesture he was using the absent-minded mastery of a practised lover. Teresa did not like such handling; she was no actress and could not throw herself into her part sufficiently for its demands. A certain stolidity in her, an absence of the invariable response, brought him to himself with a start; he remembered that he had got poor little Tessa and not the full-blooded contadina he had framed. He laughed at her reassuringly, and finished the scene with a kind of bantering gaiety which put her at her ease.

They worked away until Susan, sidling round the door, told them that supper was ready. Very hungry and happy they all trooped into the hall, where Kate, flushed and dishevelled, was helping soup from an enormous tureen. Linda, already seated at the table, had begun her meal. She raised her eyes contemptuously to look at the musicians, but at the sight of Antonia she remained fixed in a stare.

"Oh!" she said slowly. "So you've come back?"

"Yes. I've come back. What soup is it, Kate?"

"We mayn't ask where you've been, I suppose," asked Linda.

"I've been on a visit."

"Oh, indeed! I hope you enjoyed yourself."

"Very much, thank you."

"You never know," murmured Linda thoughtfully. "Sometimes girls don't enjoy visits as much as they think they will. Sometimes they come back . . . quite changed."

"Will Sanger be down to supper, Kate?" interrupted Lewis hastily.

"Yes," said Kate. "Jacob Birnbaum is with him. I went up to tell them and they are just coming down."

"Jacob," stated Linda, "came the same time Tony did. You'll tell me, I suppose, that you didn't travel together."

Antonia took no notice and began to eat her soup.

"She's been stopping with 'im," piped Susan. "I heard her telling Tessa and Lina. Ah . . . oh . . . Mammy! Tessa pinched me!"

"Oh, God! Will you leave the child alone!" exclaimed Linda, angrily leaning forward to box Teresa's ears. "Come here, Suzanne, and tell us what you heard."

"Tessa and Lina was eating cherries and they wouldn't give me any and shut me out of the room. So I climbed up into the balcony and listened to everything they said to spite them. And Tony came in and said she'd been stopping at Ike's flat . . ."

"Yes? Be quiet, Lewis, please! I want to hear this. Kate! I wonder at you, interrupting in that rude way. You can tell Mr. Trigorin about the landslide afterwards. Just all of you be quiet and let me hear this. Go on, lovey! What next?"

"She's a filthy little liar!" burst out Antonia. "I never said anything of the sort, did I, girls?"

"No!" asserted her sisters loyally.

"Didn't you? We'll see. When Suzanne's finished telling me all she heard she can repeat it over again to your father."

At that moment Sanger appeared at the head of the stairs, an enormous, infirm figure. His son Caryl supported him. Jacob Birnbaum strolled thoughtfully along the passage behind them and peered over their shoulders at the scene going on in the hall below. Linda rose and pointed at Antonia.

"Look at her, Albert!" she bawled. "Just look at her. She's come back, if you please. D'you want to know what she's been up to?"

Sanger descended the stairs with difficulty, leaning heavily on Caryl's arm and preceded by Gelert, his boarhound. Birnbaum, looking a trifle nervous, brought up the rear of this procession. Lewis and Trigorin forgot Antonia and her troubles in the shocked surprise with which they viewed their host. In the months that had elapsed since they saw him last, disease and decay had made rapid advances. His huge frame looked shrunken: the flesh sagged heavily on a face half hidden by grizzled hair. The splendid vitality of the man was gone, leaving this mountainous wreck, blinking at them with dim bloodshot eyes.

When he reached the hall his mistress began to upbraid him and Antonia, calling them by every discreditable name in her very extensive vocabulary. Lewis and Birnbaum, used to these scenes, greeted each other with long faces and tried to create a diversion by announcing that the corkscrew had been lost. But Sanger paid no heed to any of them; he continued to stare at his daughter as if waiting for her to speak. She had gone very white, but was steadily drinking her soup as if nothing had happened.

"Well, my girl," he said at last. "I had intended to beat you when you got home. But it's too much trouble; too . . . much . . . trouble. Besides, I'm hungry."

And he collapsed into his chair at the head of the table.

"When I'm less busy," he promised Linda, "I'll institute a disciplinary system. I'll thrash all the girls for half an hour every morning, including Susan."

And he shot a ferocious look at his youngest, who shivered in her chair, though, as a matter of fact, she was the only child in the house who escaped his blows.

"Thrash all the girls every day?" asked Sebastian, who had joined them in time to hear this remark. "What for?"

"For their incontinent behaviour," replied their father. "Beating, Sebastian, is the only remedy. You can beat Susan if you like."

"I would like," said Sebastian.

"If the men of this family coöperate, we may manage to introduce a little order into the household. Caryl shall beat Kate."

"Kate doesn't need it," said Sebastian gravely.

"I daresay not. But a little undeserved beating does them no harm. Kate will be all the better for it."

And Sanger looked affectionately into Kate's distressed face and asked her for some soup.

"You'd better let Jacob beat Antonia," said Linda sourly. "He's been keeping her this past week."

"Is that so?" Sanger shifted his morose regard from his daughter to his friend. "Is that so, Jacob?"

"I hope that you have no objection," said Birnbaum, with as much effrontery as he could muster. "Some day, perhaps, some more of the children will come down. We amused ourselves so much. But Tony was anxious to be at home for the birthday."

Sanger sighed gustily and said:

"Very friendly of you, Jacob!"

At which Birnbaum looked uncomfortable. Antonia, lifting her head for the first time, looked at her father and then at her lover with stony, scornful eyes. In the uneasy pause which ensued the voice of Trigorin was heard in a speech which had gone on, unheeded, ever since Sanger appeared on the stairs.

"There is no privilege," he was saying, "which I have more desired than to be a guest at this house."

"Bless my soul! Trigorin!" exclaimed Sanger. "I'd forgotten you were here. I must apologize. But you're a family man yourself, I believe, so you're probably accus-

tomed to this sort of thing. I hope Kate is making you comfortable. Look! Have you met Birnbaum?"

But Trigorin did not want to talk to Birnbaum, who was, obviously, no musician. And Birnbaum did not want to talk to any one. He occupied himself sulkily in pulling corks and glancing furtively at Antonia. Sanger was very silent and ate little. He sat staring at his plate in such a moody abstraction, heaving such melancholy sighs, that nobody liked to speak to him. Lewis talked to Caryl in undertones, the children giggled at their end of the table, and Trigorin was thrown once more upon the melting glances of Linda.

The gloomy meal proceeded calmly enough save for a scene in which Paulina and Sebastian were ordered from the room for spitting at each other across the table. But even this was accomplished without the tumult and gusto of other days. Sanger had lost his love of life. He was a sick man, absorbed in his last desperate struggle; too ill to resent the conduct of his children and his friends. He saw the looks which Linda cast upon Trigorin; he guessed that Birnbaum had seduced his daughter, but he could not rouse himself to any protest. Towards the end of supper, however, having drunk a good deal of the cognac which Birnbaum had brought him, he brightened up a little. He began to tease Lewis about the "Revolutionary Songs," and told how at an early rehearsal the tenors had taken their first lead a bar late and how they had remained a bar late throughout the piece, whereat Lewis determined that it sounded better that way. Later in the evening he became very good company indeed and told them funny stories about Brahms. For an hour he was himself again, and his friends forgot their gloom; they caught the old sense of space and heroic joviality—felt that they were assisting at something epic and earning a sort of immortality simply by listening to Sanger and



laughing with him. But as the night advanced he became less intelligible, and when Caryl and Lewis took him up to bed he was speechless. Trigorin and Birnbaum, who did not find much to say to each other, retired to the spare bedroom which they were to share.

## CHAPTER IV

JACOB BIRNBAUM stood behind a screen which formed one of the wings in "a room in the Vatican." His intelligent forehead was smothered beneath three tea cosies, placed one upon the other, to form a papal crown. The rest of his person was muffled in an ancient Spanish cope. He made a sufficiently impressive Borgia. Upon the stage the Dodd opera was in full swing and Trigorin was rattling away at the piano. Antonia was dying in as Latin a manner as she could compass, her long hair trailing over the shoulder of Roberto, who made a most polite little cardinal, in Kate's red dressing-gown. He supported the poisoned lady as she swung through her final swift, suave, heart-rending air, and when she had breathed her last put her on the floor almost at Birnbaum's feet. She lay there very pink and pleased with herself, her eyes tightly shut in an innocent attempt to look convincingly dead.

The man in the wings stared down at her sombrely, his mind ranging back unhappily over all that had befallen the pair of them since that day, scarcely a month ago, when he had looked at her picking freesias in the garden at Genoa and discovered, with a sense of dazed shock, the enchantment of her loveliness and youth. That day had been the beginning of his madness. At the thought of the havoc she had made in his peace of mind he could almost wish that she was really lying dead at his feet. If she were dead she could not be more lost to him. Should this sweet, tormenting thing, that had been his, die and be buried, be thrust away

under the mould, he might forget her. But while the living, revengeful spirit which had eluded him gazed upon him with her eyes and mocked him with her tongue he could never hope for tranquillity.

Because she had seemed to promise Paradise, and because he was accustomed to get what he wanted, he had persuaded her, with promises of lavish entertainment, to come to Munich. The rest of the business had been most pitifully easy. Only, in return, she had made a fool of him; she had opened his eyes so completely to the illusion of all possession that he doubted if he should ever again enjoy anything without an after-taste of bitterness. She had given him none of the bliss he had anticipated; and long before the end of the week he knew that he had made an irremediable mistake, that his need had been for some moment of shared passion, some appeasement of his loneliness, some sign that she returned his feeling. He would gladly have relinquished his brief, unsubstantial victory, if that were possible, for some hint that he was in any way necessary to her happiness. But an implacable remorse told him that by his own folly he had lost her.

Upon the stage Scaramello, the servant, was being instructed to throw her into the Tiber. He picked her up and carried her behind the screen. When he had set her carefully upon her feet she opened her eyes with a laugh which ended abruptly, since she found herself so close to Jacob Birnbaum. Shrinking back she eyed him defiantly, and he, stung by a sudden, unendurable pain, returned her glance with a smile of deliberate insolence which sent her pale with fury. Lewis, watching them, thought that they made a pretty pair; he shuddered a little at them. He did not like to think what dark things must have passed between them at Munich that they should still choose to remain in each other's company for the sake, apparently, of mutual torment.

He turned his back on them and, since his head that day was completely in the clouds, he soon forgot them.

The even flow of his own music pleased and soothed him, but he found that he could not listen to it in a spirit of intelligent criticism. A strange helplessness had come upon him; he knew it for the first stage of a violent seizure of mental and spiritual activity. Very soon he would be thinking desperately, but at the moment he was obsessed and baffled by a vague conception, a form, the outlines of a new thing in his mind. While this veiled idea disturbed his peace he could not think connectedly upon any subject, since he must needs reject every image which was not the right one. He brooded absently—anxious, yet afraid of the moment when his thought should take shape.

Presently Birnbaum had to leave them and join the group on the stage. Lewis, standing with Antonia behind the screen, was jerked out of his absorption and exasperated beyond all reason when he discovered that she was in tears. He whispered fiercely over his shoulder:

"Stop making that noise, can't you?"

She felt herself that he ought not to be disturbed when he was listening to his own music, and with a meek gulp she replied:

"I'll try. Can you lend me a handkerchief?"

He thought he could. He searched his raiment and at last discovered a very dirty red cotton object which he gave her. Then he turned his back again while she quietly mopped her eyes, until the end of the piece set her free to run away and howl as loudly as she pleased.

He took his call, lost still in his uneasy preoccupation. He climbed on to the stage and bowed to an audience composed of Linda, Susan, Sanger, and the village schoolmaster. They crowded round him, and Linda said that she hadn't known he could write anything so pretty, and Sanger said that he was

an amusing fellow. Trigorin clasped his hand in a couple of wet white ones.

"It is admirable," he gasped. "You say it is to imitate the Italian opera? I say not. It is inspired by that school . . . yes . . . but also it is original. My dear sir, it is a work of genius!"

"Very good of you to say so," replied Lewis, trying to release himself. "You played well, Trigorin. I don't know how you managed to make out my scrawls."

"It was a pleasure . . . an honour. I like it so much. It is so beautiful, that little work. It has the true melody . . ."

"Is it an advance on the 'Revolutionary Songs'?" asked Birnbaum, who was listening.

"But no," said Trigorin, shaking his head very seriously. "That I cannot say. This I like so much; but the others I like better. They also are the work of genius, but more heavy."

Lewis looked very much pained and intimated that he himself was inclined to consider "Breakfast with the Borgias" as the most profound effort he had yet made. It was a blow to him, he said, if Mr. Trigorin thought it superficial. He had succeeded in reducing his fellow-guest to a perfectly speechless condition of embarrassment and mortification when Linda was heard to ask, in no mean voice, why a part had not been written for Susan.

"The child can sing in tune," she asserted. "And I'd like to know why she's been passed over."

"My dear Linda," expostulated Albert, "one must keep the thing even. We like a high standard in our family productions, but Susan's level is beyond the rest of us."

"I don't know why you should have such a spite against the poor little thing, I'm sure," complained Linda, fondling

Susan. "As if it matters how a kiddie of that age does things! I don't see anything so wonderful, come to that, in the way that Lina and Sebastian sang their parts."

"There was nothing wonderful," said Sanger wearily, "except that they had the grace to take pains. If either of them had dared to set up the confounded little pipe which we hear from Susan I'd have stopped the piece. You never did, did you? I dare say not."

"I can tell you, Albert, there's plenty of people think differently. There was a gentleman down in Genoa that heard her sing and he said she was wonderful for her age. He said she'd inherited her talent, and he'd know her anywhere for Sanger's daughter. He said she'd go very far."

"Sanger's daughter! Heaven and earth! Sanger's daughter! Isn't it bad enough to have begotten anything like Susan? I'm ready to swear I never did. And now a gentleman in Genoa says she takes after me! An intolerable insult! Birnbaum! Will you listen to this? A gentleman in Genoa who heard Susan sing . . . have you heard Susan sing, by the way? You haven't? Well, then, you shall. Pop up on to the platform, Sue, and give us a song. Let me see . . . what did you sing to the gentleman in Genoa? The flower song out of 'Faust'? I might have known it. Sing that! I dare say Trigorin will be able to play it for you."

"That's right, dearie, it's your turn now to sing a bit," said Linda, who could not believe that any one should hear Susan sing and not find her very sweet.

Susan needed no encouragement. She was delighted with any sort of notice. She climbed on to the dais, pushed back her yellow curls, and began to warble in a shallow, sugary treble. Her facility, self-confidence, and inaccuracy were on

a level with the amazing vulgarity of her performance. She paraded every cheap effect, every little trick, most likely to outrage the pure taste of her relations. And yet there was a certain dash and assurance about her which explained the prophecy of the gentleman in Genoa. Sanger himself was inclined to fear that her push and her unscrupulous showiness would carry her further than the others and establish her as the star of the family. Hence his animosity; he could not bear that she should eclipse the patient, industrious talent of Caryl and Kate, or the fine brilliance of Evelyn's children. He scowled heavily all through her song.

But she, with a persistent, babyish simper, ignored this, and ignored also the loud retching noises whereby her younger brother and sisters indicated their nausea at the style of her performance. At the end she acknowledged the slightly ironic applause of her elders as though conscious of popularity, jumped down and ran to hide her face in her mother's lap, a pretty gesture which they had rehearsed in private.

"Little monkey!" observed Sanger wrathfully. "That's what I have to put up with. And she'll disgrace us on every platform in Europe before she's done. But I sha'n't know it. The worms will have me before then, thank God."

He relapsed into gloom for a little while, and then said:

"Kate, my dear! Don't be shy. We're an indulgent audience and won't expect a second Susan of you. Couldn't you oblige us a little? We've not heard as much of you to-night as I'd like."

"I'm sorry," said Lewis. "I'd no idea Kate was turning into such a prima donna, or she should have had more songs of her very own. Do sing, Kate!"

Kate sang and they were all delighted with her. She sang one song after another to meet every taste, and ended

with a somewhat ambitious composition of Caryl's, a setting to the lines:

*Du bist wie eine Blume!*

which was received by the family with varying appreciation since its sentiment was practically incomprehensible to most of them. At the end of it Lewis began to congratulate Caryl with such fulsomeness, so palpably in imitation of Trigorin, that all the children began to giggle. He was enlarging upon his privileges in being allowed to listen to a first performance of this detestable little work when Sanger, who felt that things were really going too far, went across to Trigorin and began to be civil to him. He praised his reading of the pencil score and explained how much obliged they all were. Trigorin beamed. It was the first conversational opening given to him by Sanger during this whole visit.

"It was easy," he said. "Often I must read music that is so badly written. It is very nice, this piece? Yes?"

"Humph!" said Sanger. "Very pretty fooling. It suited the cast, which was all that was required."

Trigorin, who had had a cross letter from his wife that morning, thought he saw an opportunity and rushed upon his fate.

"It is a diversion to write for an artist sometimes. It is amusing. My wife, she hopes that you will one day write a ballet for her . . . a little thing . . ."

Sanger stiffened and shot up his eyebrows.

"I'm honoured," he said. "But I don't suppose I could write a ballet that would suit Madame to save my life. Why not get Birnbaum here to write one? It's much more in his line."

"I did not know . . ." began Trigorin doubtfully, looking at the young Jew.



"You didn't know that he wrote music? Well, he hasn't written any yet. But he should. He should! And he owns several theatres. Look here, Birnbaum! Here's Trigorin wants one of us to write a ballet for Madame. I tell him you'd better do it and produce it at one of your places."

"I think that Madame Zhigalova would not be pleased with my work," said Jacob. "Why does he not do it himself?"

"I cannot write music," said Trigorin sadly.

"Perhaps you could, if you tried. It is quite easy, is it not, my friend?"

"Quite," said Sanger, returning his grin. "Yes; it would be an excellent speculation to write all her ballets yourself, Trigorin."

"Don't listen to them, Mr. Trigorin," whispered Linda, behind him, "they're just laughing at you."

The baited man turned round and looked at her and remembered how much kinder she had been than any one else at the Karindehütte. She dropped her large white eyelids and made a place for him beside her on the window seat. For a second he wavered, looking towards the piano where Sanger, Lewis, and Birnbaum were talking together; but he knew that they did not want him, so he sat down and surrendered himself to her. She could at least help him to forget his mortification; to his sorrowing spirit she brought an easy forgetfulness; she stirred his pulses and provoked no ideas either of good or of evil.

They embarked upon a whispered conversation full of long significant pauses, as a pair of chess players will hesitate and ponder over the moves of a game. Their common goal was oblivion, escape from their several sorrows. For Linda, despite her placidity, had a sorrow—a sort of composite dread of poverty, insecurity, and increasing flesh; a fear of

the future which was creeping over her life like a chilly fog; a vision of herself as an enormous old woman, starving to death.

The company meanwhile was breaking up. The school-master took his leave and Lewis, attracted by the moonlight outside, strolled a little way down the hill with him. Sanger and Caryl went upstairs to begin on their night's work. Birnbaum, straying unhappily through the house, was looking for Antonia, though he did not in the least know what he wanted to say if he found her. He stumbled over the two little girls sitting on the top step of the stairs and asked if they had seen her.

"She's in our room, Ike," said Paulina. "Crying like anything. She's been crying all the evening."

"Crying," he repeated, startled, yet a little hopeful. "That's a pity."

"She often cries," said Teresa without much concern.

"She's a regular cry-baby," added Paulina.

"So are you!" Teresa was moved to retort. "You both of you roar and yell at the least little thing."

"What is she crying for?" asked Jacob anxiously.

"Because Lewis wouldn't let her be Lucrezia Borgia," they told him. "She was dreadfully hurt because he despised her singing."

"So!" he exclaimed in some disappointment, and took himself off to bed.

"It's no use us going up till Tony's quiet," said Paulina.

Teresa said nothing but crouched at the top of the stairs, brooding disconsolately, her thin arms round her knees. Suddenly she had become intensely miserable. She stared down into the darkness of the hall, cut in two by the moonlight which streamed in through the open door. She could not bear it. She jumped up with a little cry of exasperation.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "How I hate it all!"

"Hate what?" asked Paulina mildly.

"Everybody! Everything! I hate the whole world!"

"Everything does seem horrid this year," agreed Paulina sadly. "We don't seem to have the fun we used to."

"Good-bye," said Teresa, setting off down the stairs.

"Where are you off to? Are you going out?"

"Yes! I must get out of this . . ."

She ran out to hide herself in the mountains, frightened and furious, pursued by a desolate foreboding which seemed to fill the quiet house. As she stumbled up towards the pass she kept murmuring to herself:

"I wish I could die! I wish I was dead!"

She knew that she did not mean this; she was not in the least anxious to die. But the violence of such a statement seemed to satisfy her, just as it was a relief to run up hill.

## CHAPTER V

THE top of the pass was such a quiet place that Teresa very soon recovered her peace of mind. She could see nothing of the trees or the world of men, since the valley leading down to Weissau was full of clouds. Above and around her was the sky, empty save for the moon. Mountain peaks stood up in that space, bare to the light. She was at a point where the track balanced itself for a moment on the ridge and then dived into an inky valley on the far side. From that blackness rose the echoing murmur of many waterfalls, so that the pit of night was full of sound. She stood, looking down, already calmer.

By the path was a small wooden Calvary marking a spring, and near it a grotto of stones built the year before by Paulina and Sebastian. They had said it was for prayer and meditation, which was strange, for neither of them was much given to this employment; but the building had kept them happy for three weeks. Winter storms had blown it down, and it lay now a tumbled heap of stones beside the crucifix with its penthouse roof. Teresa thought how nice it would be to build, not a grotto, but a little house where she could live always, watching the blizzards blown across the pass, and the snow melting, and the flowers of spring pushing up through the grass. And in the summer she would have a cornet, and, hidden in the mountains she would play lovely tunes and give terrific shocks to lonely travellers toiling over the pass with their knapsacks. For nobody should know of the little house.

She climbed a knoll, the highest point near by, and stared

round her. In every direction she could see for miles and miles, but the view was simple, a succession of serene ranges sticking up into emptiness. The moon had painted them all a uniform black and white, and the sky was no colour at all. It was a simplification which delighted her; she needed it. There were, usually, too many things. The people and colours and noises crowded her mind with ideas and confused her. Often she felt that she saw nothing clearly, but here, where there was so very little to see, it might be managed. She turned round to the Königsjoch, which hung almost above her, and took a good look at it. Its stony crags, its snowfields, and the smooth, bare outline of its summit seemed almost near enough to touch, yet she knew them to be miles away. She stared hungrily, trying to stamp this image on her mind and thus secure it for ever and ever. She became entranced with it. As she looked she had an idea, a passionate hope, which took her breath away. If she could ever see but one thing properly she might quite easily see God.

The thought so moved her that she flung herself down on the short wind-blown grass and gazed up into the sky above her, waiting, rigid in an effort to reach singleness of mind. Nothing happened. In a few minutes she became painfully exhausted and very cold. The wind in her hair came straight off the snowfields. She began to think more kindly of her exasperating family down at the Karindehütte. She would go back to them.

She pulled herself together for the descent, aware that a frightful weariness was aching in all her bones. Glancing down towards the path she saw that a man was standing there, staring at the mountains in a kind of lost trance, as if he had discovered the secret thing which had escaped her. It was Lewis. She blew a loving little kiss at his unconscious figure, thinking how well she was acquainted with the

shape of his head at the back. She could have drawn it with her eyes shut; she had sat so often watching him while he conducted symphonies to which she did not always listen. And in this place he did not look more solitary than he always seemed in crowded concert halls.

Presently his vision seemed to break up, and he took to walking about, in a distraught frenzy, stumbling sometimes, and often almost running. She knew what ailed him and was very sorry. Living in a family of artists she had come to regard this implacable thing which took them as a great misfortune. Oddly enough it had missed her out; alone of the tribe, she was safe from it. She did not believe that she would ever be driven to these monstrous creative efforts. She desired nothing but to be allowed to look on at the world; and the result of her observations had been that she rated the writing of music as an atrocious and painful disease. She pitied her friend when it assailed him as much as if he had fallen down and broken his leg. To her the thing was a hidden curse, a family werewolf, always ready to spring out and devour them all. It was at the bottom of most of their misfortunes. Its place in her scheme of things was approximate to the position which the devil might hold in the mind of a better-instructed little girl.

"Poor Lewis," she murmured. "I thought as much! He's been looking like a broody hen all the week."

She guessed that he must not discover her and was for stealing off down the far side of the hill when he caught sight of her. Immediately he hailed her, bounding up the slope very quickly, so that she could not get away.

"Tessa! What are you doing here? Aren't you cold?"

He spoke almost mechanically, as if he hardly knew what he said. She saw that he was shaken and unhappy at being caught off his guard. She said that she had come up to look at the moon, and he smiled rather sourly.

"It's a pity to go moon gazing at your age," he told her. "But I suppose it's a symptom."

"What of?"

"The green sickness."

"What's that? It sounds very disagreeable."

He looked as if he meant it to be disagreeable. He insisted upon explaining himself with a bitterness which said to her, as plainly as possible, that she was not to suppose he was come to these moonlit mountains because he found them at all beautiful, or that he had any regard for the feelings of any one else who might happen to think so. She felt that he deserved to be teased a little, and when he had done she said:

"What a ray of sunshine you are! It was the green sickness, I suppose, brought you up here. I thought at first you'd come to look for that sixpence we lost two years ago. I saw you running round in rings."

"How long have you been up here?" he asked suspiciously.

"Longer than you. You disturbed me."

"Why didn't you say so?"

"I didn't want to be disturbed. I was busy thinking. I was just going off quietly to a less crowded part of this mountain when you must needs interrupt me."

She was edging away from him. He saw suddenly that she was really afraid of him. Something that he had said must have hurt her. He laughed and asked what she was thinking of, whereat she took to her heels, ignoring his shout that she should stop. Wildly she fled down the hill, terrified, hearing him gain upon her, and seized by the primitive panic of the hunted. When, quite soon, he caught her, she screamed loudly.

"Damn you! Why can't you stop when I call?" he panted. "Now tell me. . . . My God, Tessa! What's the matter?"

"Go away!"

"Have you got a handkerchief?" he asked presently. "Because I lent mine to Tony, who also needed it to-night."

At the mention of Tony her tears ceased abruptly. She turned away from him with a slight wounded gesture, and was silent.

"This seems to be a habit in your family," he jibed. "If you've got a handkerchief, perhaps I'd better retire."

But he did not offer to go. He stood still, watching her intently, full of a sort of compunction. She was nearer than he liked to the rocky edge of the path, which dropped away to a sea of clouds below. He had an apprehension that she might spring over if he moved or touched her. He waited, and was startled to hear her speaking in a low voice, almost to herself:

"Tony's been crying all the evening."

"Oh, Tony!" he exclaimed impatiently.

And he took a short turn along the path, away from her, as if he was afraid that she would force upon him some piece of information about Tony. He did not want to hear anything about Tony. She was a white flower, cast into the pit. He had been very fond of her when she was a little wild thing, like Tessa, a delicate, audacious creature, trapped now in the inevitable mill. No man endowed with heart and imagination could care to contemplate such a spectacle.

Lewis had both these commodities in a distressing degree. He spent his life in running away from them, and his cruelty was a kind of instinctive defence which he had set up against them. His refuge had been a sombre arrogance which denied to the rest of the world capacities for suffering equal to his own. He hurt his friends by way of demonstrating for his own satisfaction their comfortable insensibility. He really wished to convince himself that the majority of mankind is too stupid to apprehend anything keener than physical pain.



and he nourished this illusion by a perverse frequenting of the company of people who were, for the most part, more brutal than himself.

Even so, he was not altogether safe. On the occasions when, despite his resistance, some sorrow of the outer world pierced the armour of his egotism, he was, out of all proportion, disturbed, simply because he would not admit that tears are the common lot. He fled from his own compassion.

He had done his best, of late, to avoid Antonia, and, if it had been possible, he would have avoided Teresa while she was thus shaken with the reverberations of her sister's evil fortune. Only that he could never fly from Teresa. She was a darling, simply, and must always be comforted, even though his own ineptitude had done the damage. She was the sweet exception to all the young, fierce generalizations with which he dismissed the world. He came back to her and took her arm and began to walk her up the hill again, consoling and protesting rather incoherently:

"Don't worry about Tony, my dear love. She'll be all right. She'll settle down. She's . . . she's just growing up. That's not comfortable. But it happens to everybody. God help them!"

Teresa seemed hardly to listen, but his last sentence caught her attention and she asked curiously:

"Do you believe in God then?"

He thought about it and said that he did.

"Though I'm blest if I know what I mean when I say it. What do you believe, Tessa?"

She hesitated and then told him how, a few minutes since, she had felt herself to be on the brink of a discovery.

"I didn't see anything," she said sadly. "That's because I'm so very ignorant. When I say God, I don't know what I mean. If I was Roberto I'd be better off, for I would know. I'd mean that God up there."

And she nodded towards the Calvary, standing out clear against the sky above them, guarding even in this lonely place the secret of man's eternal pain.

"You don't mean Him?" she asked Lewis rather doubtfully.

Lewis replied, almost furiously, that he did not. He hurried her past the place and they wandered away, round the corner of the hill, to a sort of platform where they could look across at the Karwendal ranges, distant, icy, inhuman. Here, if anywhere, dwelt the divinity which they both worshipped. They sat down together on the grass and fell to talking in hushed tones as if afraid of disturbing the silent immensity of the night. He told her a number of things, he hardly knew what; small, absurd things which he had seen and done in his wandering life. They caught her attention and soothed her distress. Soon she was laughing, and when at last they set off for home she was skipping along beside him with the lightheartedness which usually belonged to her.

He had always thought her the pick of the bunch. She was an admirable, graceless little baggage, entirely to his taste. She amused him, invariably. And, queerly enough, she was innocent. That was an odd thing to say of one of Sanger's daughters, but it was the truth. Innocence was the only name he could find for the wild, imaginative solitude of her spirit. The impudence of her manners could not completely hide it, and beyond it he could discern an intensity of mind which struck him as little short of a disaster in a creature so fragile and tender, so handicapped by her sex. She would give herself to pain with a passionate readiness, seeing only its beauty, with that singleness of vision which is the glory and the curse of such natures. He wondered anxiously, and for the first time, what was to become of her.

He knew.

He had always known, and until to-night he had taken it for granted. She was barely two years younger than that sister whose history she would inevitably repeat. Paulina, too, was fashioned for the same fate. Unbalanced, untaught, fatally warm-hearted, endowed with none of the stolid prudence which had protected the more fortunate Kate, they were both likely to set about the grimy business of life in much the same way. He knew what company they kept; lust, a blind devourer, a brutish, uncomprehending Moloch, haunted their insecure youth, claiming them as predestined victims.

And to-night he discovered that he could not accept this. He had always supposed, vaguely, that Teresa would spare his feelings by growing up quite suddenly of her own accord; leaping into an experienced maturity which should demand no compassion. Now he grasped disturbing possibilities. While she was still so childish, so liable to be hurt, she ought to be safeguarded. She must be . . . she must be shut up. There were too many Birnbaums about. He scowled so dreadfully and marched her down the hill at such a pace that she wanted to ask him what was the matter now. She could not know that he was humming that song which Caryl had written for Kate, since he had heartily abused it. Yet the tune of it was on his lips:

*Ich schau'dich an und Wehmuth  
Schleicht mir in's Herz hinein.*

He need not have distressed himself so violently on her account. She was guarded by the constant simplicity of her young heart. He was himself the only man who could ever betray it, and she had been his, had he known it, as long as she could remember. Her love was as natural and necessary

to her as the breath she drew, which is, perhaps, the reason why he divined nothing of it. And if he had known he would not, probably, have thought her fortunate. He would have wished her a better fancy. As it was, he thought that if she were his little girl he would put her into a convent. He knew little of convents, but he imagined that they were safer for girls than Sanger's circus. Lina, by way of precaution, ought to be in one, too. It would be dull, perhaps, but there were, on the whole, worse things than dullness. He wondered whether he could, as an intimate friend, persuade Sanger to take some steps about it.

They parted at the house door and he climbed up to his room in the annexe. Teresa danced away to the girls' bedroom and remembered on the threshold that Antonia might still be crying there. She put her head round the door and saw that the room was empty. It was a large barn of a place with very little furniture. There was one bed for Kate and Tony and another for Tessa and Lina. Kate's clothes were packed away in a painted chest under the window, but the entire wardrobe of the other young ladies lay about permanently in heaps on the floor amid books, music, guitars, cigarette ends, cherry stones, and dust. Entering hastily, Teresa began to pull off her clothes and fling them down about the room as she promenaded in the moonlight, humming gaily her little duet with Lewis in "Breakfast with the Borgias." An old pair of Kate's stays lay across a chair and she tried them on, observing with dismal accuracy how far too ample was their fit.

"Yet Kate's not fat," she reflected, "it's I who am such a scarecrow. I wish I was Caterina."

This was a sister of Roberto who had helped with the house work in Genoa and who, at fifteen, possessed a figure which was the secret envy of Teresa and Paulina. In their eyes a southern richness of outline was the height of beauty

and they deeply deplored their own angular contours. Teresa was still sitting in her brief chemise wondering sadly how to grow fat when Paulina sauntered into the room, and, after glancing twice behind her in a nervous way, began in a scared whisper:

"I say . . . Tessa . . ."

"Yes?"

Paulina shuffled her feet, unable to proceed.

"Yes! What is it?"

"Oh, Tessa!" cried Paulina with a little gasp.

"*Espèce d'imbécile!* What's the matter?"

Paulina came quite close and clutched her arm.

"I'm frightened," she said in a very low voice.

"What? Lina, what is it?"

"Will you come, please?"

"Come! Where?"

"Tony and I are frightened . . . at a very funny thing."

"A funny thing! Where?"

"In . . . in Sanger's room."

"Were you in there?"

"No. We heard it. Outside the door."

The sacredness of Sanger's room was an unbroken law. No child ever ventured there without express permission.

"What did you hear?"

"A funny noise. Do come, Tessa!"

Teresa got up and made for her father's room.

"Is Caryl there, Lina?"

"No," panted Paulina, still clutching her arm. "He's gone down to the valley to help Kate carry up the milk."

They climbed the stairs to the top landing, where they found Antonia and Sebastian listening intently outside Sanger's closed door.

"It's nothing; he's just snoring," asserted Antonia.

"Listen, Tessa!" commanded the boy.

She listened and wondered that the whole house did not tremble.

"He's not snoring," she said. "He's sort of groaning. We ought to go in. He must be ill."

"Oh, we can't," objected Antonia. "Think what a to-do there was the last time we did."

"Well, then, get Linda. She doesn't mind annoying him."

"I thought of her," whispered Antonia. "I went to her room to fetch her. But I didn't like to go in. She . . . she's got somebody in there. I heard them whispering."

They waited some seconds longer and then Teresa, mastering her panic, stole downstairs to Linda's door and listened. She could hear nothing at first and was just going to knock when she caught a stifled laugh and knew that Tony had been right. She crept away, up to the others, who were waiting outside a room which was now dreadfully silent.

"It's stopped," breathed Paulina.

They clung together, straining for the least sound, and all started violently when a padding footstep crossed the room.

"That's Gelert," said Sebastian reassuringly. "I heard him whining a minute ago."

The dog whimpered faintly and gave two short yelping barks, ending in a long howl. Paulina whispered that it was funny that Sanger did not swear at him. But no voice came, only a furious scratching at the door and another appalling howl.

"I'm going in," Teresa stated. "Something funny must have happened. Somebody ought to go. I don't care if there is a row. Will you come, Tony?"

But Antonia drew back, crying that she was afraid. Teresa opened the door and was nearly flung down by Gelert, who bounded past them and fled howling along the passage.

Sebastian pushed in front of her and advanced into the room, remarking:

"I'll come with you. I expect you'd like a man."

The lamp showed the floor all covered with sheets of music, and an overturned ink-pot and their father sprawling across the table at which he sat, his face hidden.

"He's fainted," suggested Teresa. "We ought to give him brandy."

Sebastian tugged at the heavy body, trying to turn it over, his white face flushing with the strain. They both pulled and the chair with Sanger in it toppled over and went thudding to the floor. She bounded towards the table for a brandy flask, but her brother, looking at the face which gaped up at them, said:

"It's no use. He's dead."

"Oh, no! No!"

She knelt beside her father, pouring brandy into his mouth and over his face and over the music on the floor until Sebastian took the flask from her and led her from the room, repeating:

"It's no use, Tessa. He's dead. We must get people. I'll go and look for Ike. You fetch Lewis."

"Oh, Lewis. . . . I must get Lewis . . ."

She whispered his name to herself as she crossed the moonlit space between the house and the annexe. She had to walk rather slowly because of the ache of terror which seemed to numb all her limbs. The stairs to his door seemed difficult to climb. She stood, fingering the latch, telling him what had happened. And Lewis, who had been lying half dressed on his bed, jumped up and began to put on his boots. His coat he wrapped round Teresa, for she was shivering, and he took her back into the house. Her father's room was full of people. Roberto and Birnbaum were there, bending over Sanger's body, and Sebastian was trying to mop up

the ink on the floor. They were all dazed and silent until Linda, in a pink silk wrapper with all her yellow hair blazing on her shoulders, burst into the room. Trigorin followed her. When she saw what had happened she turned a queer chalky white and burst into noisy, unrestrained weeping. Her loud cries rang through the stricken house so that Caryl and Kate, coming up from the valley, heard, and knew that calamity had overtaken them all.



BOOK II  
NYMPHS AND SHEPHERDS



## CHAPTER VI

THE news of Sanger's death was received with concern everywhere but in England. Even there, however, the fact of it was reported in the newspapers. "Our Austrian Correspondent" wrote a little paragraph to say that Albert Sanger, by birth an Englishman and well known in Germany and elsewhere as a conductor and composer, had died at his residence in the Karwendal mountains. His best-known works were "Akbar," "Prester John," "Barbarossa," "Susanna," "The Mountains," etc. It was thus that the news of the calamity reached the Churchill family.

The unfortunate Evelyn had possessed two brothers, both distinguished scholars and both a good deal older than herself. Of these Robert, the least brilliant and the most commercial of the family, had become the principal of a flourishing university in the Midlands. Charles had never got further than being the Master of St. Merryn's, Cambridge, a position which half of his friends did not consider nearly good enough for him. The other half held that it had become important simply by reason of his holding it. He had a finger in a good many pies. He was acknowledged to be a great man by most of his generation: he looked so like one that he would probably have been able to impose himself on the world even if he had not possessed so many and such solid attainments. His gifted brother Robert could never succeed in looking like anything but an unsuccessful housemaster in a second-rate public school—a gray, harassed, precise gentleman, an invincible pedagogue, but without any of the more endearing traits of erudition, its

antique polish, or its unworldliness. He was always neatly dressed by the best of wives. Charles was the butt of a hundred caricaturists; his large unwieldy body, his little legs, his small eyes twinkling behind enormous glasses, and the gray, bushy hair which fringed his bald crown, were known all over the academic world. The contrast presented by his somewhat gross person and the fine delicacy of his wits formed the theme of endless anecdote. Being a widower he wore his clothes until they fell off him, for no better reason than that he liked them, had got used to them, and objected to change. His beautiful daughter, who kept house for him, indulged him in this and in every other whim. Early in her teens she had especially studied the business of being "the Master's daughter" and she did it very prettily, calling him "Sir" after the manner of a junior member of the College.

It was Charles who first discovered the paragraph about Albert Sanger. He came upon it at breakfast and read it through twice over with close attention. Then he took a large bite of hot buttered toast and glanced across the table at his daughter, announcing:

"Albert Sanger is dead, my dear Florence."

"Albert Sanger?" said Florence, looking up absently.

She knew perfectly well who Albert Sanger was, but she was reading an article in her part of the paper on Poor Law Reform and she did not like to be interrupted.

"Your poor Aunt Evelyn's husband. My brother-in-law. Your uncle."

"Oh, yes," said she, with her eyes wandering back to the paper in her hand. "What about him, did you say?"

"He's dead."

"Oh! More coffee, sir?"

"Not yet, thank you. I'd no idea he'd written so much. Just listen to this!"

And he read the notice aloud to Florence.

"Susanna!" she said with some disfavour. "I heard it once, in Dresden. I didn't like it."

"No, my love. I daresay not. I never heard that Sanger ever wrote anything in the least like 'The Magic Flute.'"

Florence ignored this jibe, which was quite unjust, and proceeded to give reasons for her opinion of "Susanna." She invariably supported all her opinions with excellent reasons.

"I don't like subjects chosen from the Bible."

"The Apocrypha, Florence."

"Is it? Well, but it's the same *genre*. These semi-sacred operas are nearly always treated with levity and bad taste, I don't know why. They've no dignity."

"Not a very dignified theme," mused Charles.

"And it's dreary music. Ugly, you know, and noisy."

"Dear! Dear! Times change! Your aunt didn't find it ugly. She thought the world and all of him, poor girl!"

"That was a very odd affair," she commented thoughtfully.

She remembered her aunt very well. Nobody who had known the brilliant creature before her sudden and complete disappearance could possibly forget her. She played so beautifully. And she had a dashing, daring way with her and left vivid impressions of laughter and excitement and people crowding round to hear what she said. Her low voice and enchanting, husky laugh always seemed to inspire other people to make a noise; the dullest gathering, when she joined it, would gaily begin to sound like a party.

Florence was sometimes told that she resembled her aunt, but she could not feel it herself. She enjoyed a conspicuous popularity of her own, being clever, good-humoured, an excellent dancer, and competent at games. And in appearance she was, perhaps, not unlike; she had the same

clear, glowing brown skin, aquiline features, fine eyes, and neat, dark little head. She had the same choiceness of dress. But she lacked that overwhelming power to charm which Evelyn had possessed independently, as it were, from all her other qualities. Her simple, tranquil gaiety of manner, though pleasing, could never enslave a crowd. She was at her best in a small circle, while no stage had been too large for Evelyn in her prime.

Yet all that beauty and fascination had been squandered. There had been a time when Charles and Robert had hurried off to Germany, a discomposed interlude, full of telegrams and discreet family conclaves behind closed doors. Florence, a schoolgirl, could only guess at what had happened. She did not learn the full history until some years later, when she was considered old enough to hear it. By then it was too late to come at the whole truth. The runaway aunt had become crystallized into a legend, a subject for stock sentiments. She was "your poor aunt"! She had married the man Sanger, bore many children, had been, mysteriously, very unhappy, and died. That was all, and it gave very little food for the imagination. She remained, for her niece, a vital, audacious memory, an unlucky star which would not remain fixed in any charted constellation, but went streaming off, like a lost meteor, into the void.

"Poor Evelyn! Poor girl!" muttered Charles into his coffee cup. "That fellow was a brute."

"I expect," said Florence aggressively, "that she got a little bored with polite society. The world's a big place."

"So it is! So it is!" agreed Charles with a chuckle. "And plenty of fine things in it. She needn't have selected a dustman with a turn for music."

He found it uncommonly difficult to keep a straight face when his daughter instructed him as to the size of the world. It was a point which had but recently attracted her attention,

and, in his opinion, she had taken her time about coming to it.

"He had more than a turn for music," she said rather grudgingly. "What was the matter with him? What sort of class?"

"Upon my word I don't know. He was no class, as my old bedmaker used to say. No class at all. A perfectly uncultivated savage, that's what he was."

"A child of Nature?" queried Florence, who was really very curious about Sanger.

"Why, yes! That's more like it. 'Red in tooth and claw.'"

"I think I like children of Nature."

"You never met any. I, for my sins, have met Sanger. I prefer a child of grace every time."

*"Ne me laisse jamais seule avec la nature,  
Car je la connais trop bien . . ."*

quoted Florence sapiently. "But I daresay he was encouraging after a surfeit of clever young men. I'm getting very tired of clever young men myself."

"You cannot possibly be more tired of them than I am," replied the Master. "But when you are my age you'll know that stupid young men are very much worse because there are more of them."

Florence was nearly twenty-eight. She referred to the fact continually, for she had begun lately to take her age as a serious matter. She had quite suddenly grown out of a lot of things which had till then contented her.

"It doesn't say if he's left a widow," said Charles, returning to Sanger. "But he's bound to. Some sort of a widow. And children! He had children of all kinds, as you might say. Some of them are your cousins. I hope they are all

right! Remind me to write to your Uncle Robert about them. We ought to make enquiries, I think."

He got up, folded the paper, and brushed the crumbs off his waistcoat. At the door he turned to say:

"Oh . . . and the bishop will be here to lunch. And I'm dining in Hall."

Florence, having finished her breakfast, went about her household duties with the methodical but unenthusiastic efficiency of a woman who is too intelligent to neglect such things. Then she put on her hat and went out to practise string quartettes with some friends. Unlike the rest of her circle, she had no profession, but she was a busy young creature. Since she left college there had been so many attractive things to do: books, music, exciting vacations abroad, eventful terms, full of political meetings and Greek plays, charming friends and, above all, so much to discuss that she scarcely noticed the flight of time. But it had gone on quite long enough. Sometime, quite soon, she meant to put an end to it. She would settle down to some serious work, or, if she could find a man to her taste, she would marry. At present her most favoured cavaliers were in their sixties, and for a husband she wanted somebody younger than that.

As she sauntered along Chesterton Lane, lugging her unwieldy 'cello and nodding to acquaintances, she thought curiously about her aunt, and wondered if it was just mere boredom which had prompted her to fling her bonnet so effectually over the mill. She had abandoned this delightful existence for another, unimaginably remote. Was it possible to presume that she had grown tired of the refinements, the endless demands of civilization? Or had there been a force more potent than mere discontent? There had been, of course, the musical dustman. They had gone to Venice, which sounded the right sort of place, but it was difficult to



guess how they had occupied themselves. They did not discuss architecture or pictures because Sanger was an uncultivated savage and could not, presumably, discuss anything. Florence actually paused in her walk, trying to figure out what one would do in Venice with a savage. Even supposing an ungovernable passion had brought them there, it seemed that they must have been without occupation for many hours, compelled to row about silently in gondolas.

And then it was impossible to guess whether Evelyn had ultimately repented of her bargain. The family assumed that she did, but, all things considered, their grounds were slender. It looked as though they found it more decent to suppose that she regretted her conduct. They had never been able to forget that the wedding had taken place after the Venetian expedition. But Florence, who was nothing if not broadminded, took little exception to that. The only really inexcusable thing that her aunt had done was to call Sanger a great musician.

Still, there must have been more in him than was apparent to Robert and Charles since Evelyn had chosen to remain with him. A lady of such spirit would not have done that unless she had continued to be satisfied with him. So thought Florence, who had never herself gone anywhere without a full assurance that she would be able to get back. To her it was clear that Evelyn had been happy, content in the life she had chosen, finding romance in it perhaps—a splendid quality, dark and violent and exciting, like a Russian novel. Indubitably the family must have been wrong.

A week later she found her father tearing his hair over a bundle of letters.

"Florence," he said, "you never reminded me to write to your Uncle Robert about those children."

"What children, sir?"

"Your poor Aunt Evelyn's children."

"Oh, yes! I'm so sorry. I forgot all about them."

"Well, I'll have to write now, for it's obvious that something must be done. I've a letter here from one of Sanger's other children. A nice fellow he seems to be, too nice to be a son of Sanger's I should have thought. The old rascal left nothing but debts, and our children—there seem to be four of them, all under sixteen—are left to starve, unless something is done for them."

And he handed her a letter from Caryl, an excellent letter, deferential but independent. He had thought it right, he said, to discover the views of the Churchill family before making arrangements for his young half-brother and sisters. It appeared that he and Kate had got employment and were willing to contribute towards the support of the others if no other help was forthcoming. They would all be staying on in the Tyrol for another month, should Charles be disposed to communicate with them.

"Poor little dears," exclaimed Florence. "How old is he, do you think, and sister Kate?"

"I should imagine that they are all short of twenty. But just read this; it's amazing!"

He handed her a letter from Jacob Birnbaum, who began:

As a very old friend of Albert Sanger I take the liberty of writing to you. He has left four children who are, I think, related to you. Sir, you may not be aware that his death has left them penniless. The eldest is now sixteen. They are not able to support themselves without help. A brother and sister they have who are able to work, and they have said that what is possible they will do. But these, too, are very young, and I hope you will agree with me, sir, when I say that it is too much for such young people to support the whole family. I do not think it possible. I do not know if you are able to help these children, but it is right that you should know how they are left. Before arrangements shall be

made, your wishes should be asked. I have wished to pay for the little boy, for five years at a school. Also I will pay something if you should think of placing the young ladies in an establishment. I would like to do this; I have loved their father.

"Well! That's generous!" commented Florence.

"Humph! I'll believe in his money when I see it," grumbled Charles. "I distrust the common sense of anybody who could be fond of Sanger. I shouldn't worry to read the next letter, if I were you. It's very long. It's from another friend of the family who writes the most surprising English. Very flowery! He condoles with me, in two pages, upon the loss of a unique brother-in-law, spends three more in explaining what a blow it is to the whole world, and ends up with his own bereavement and the privileges of knowing Sanger. At the end, just before sending me his distinguished sentiments, he mentions that he will subscribe £500 if anything is to be done for the children. He's crazy!"

"Where do they all write from?" asked Florence, looking at the postmarks. "All posted from Weissau! Is it a sort of settlement, do you think?"

"Heaven knows! One of us will have to go and find out. They seem to be uncommonly free with their money. Personally, I favour the gentleman who wrote the postcard. He's the only one who professes no regard for Sanger."

Florence looked at the postcard, which said:

Are you thinking of taking the girls away? Somebody should. If money is short, I could let you have £50. That is all I've got, but I daresay I could send you some more some time.--Yours, etc., Lewis Dodd.

"Dodd!" she cried, in great excitement. "Lewis Dodd! Why! That must be the man who wrote the Symphony in Three Keys! You know, Father! I'm sure you've heard me

speaking of it. I heard it last time I was in Germany. It's so unfair of you to accuse me in that wholesale way of not caring for modern music. Nothing could be more modern than that symphony, and I felt quite transported when I heard it. Fancy his being a friend of Sanger's! His music is immeasurably better. The second movement is quite beyond praise. It opens with a twenty-bar theme for strings which . . ."

"I know, my dear, I know. He seems to have got fifty pounds out of it, anyhow."

"And he wrote this postcard!" she said, looking at it respectfully.

"Rather uneducated handwriting," was Charles's comment.

Florence turned it over. On the back of it was a picture of a bright blue lake surrounded by very black pines and pink mountains. A small blotchy steamer was crossing the lake in the middle of the card. Along the azure sky Mr. Dodd had written a postscript, an afterthought:

"It would be a good thing if they were put into a convent."

Charles was saying:

"But who can go? Somebody must. Somebody ought to be on the spot to settle things. And, as you know, I can't get away with this Commission coming next week."

"Of course you can't. But I can. I'll go at once and bring all the poor little dears back with me."

"Well, my dear, I'm not sure if I ought to let . . ."

"I assure you I can manage it perfectly. I'm not a child. I'm twenty-eight."

"I doubt if any woman could tackle it alone. We must see if your Uncle Robert can't go."

"Uncle Robert?" Florence looked very doubtful. "Do you think he would be any use at all?"

Charles began to laugh.

"Robert!" he shouted. "Ho! Ho! Poor Robert!"

Florence also laughed. It was their custom to be amused at Robert, who was supposed, in Cambridge, to be incapable of making or seeing a joke.

"No, it's not Robert's job," conceded Charles with a subsiding chuckle. "He was pretty well at sea, I remember, when we went out to look after your poor aunt. But this I will say for him: he has a good head on his shoulders where money is concerned. He'll deal with these philanthropic friends and their cheques."

"But really I think a woman ought to go. He won't know a bit what to do with all these little girls. They are probably very startling children. There may be all sorts of things to be settled on the spur of the moment."

"Well, then, he can take your Aunt May with him, and she can deal with any widows there may be around."

"Widows?"

"As I said, there is bound to be at least one. More probably there are half a dozen, if I know Sanger. But we'll hope they will have taken themselves off before Robert and May arrive."

"Oh, I should like to go!" cried Florence with sparkling eyes. "I should love to see Uncle Robert confronted with the widows. And I'm sure Aunt May won't go, for Hilda and Betty have the measles. If she can't, I think I really must."

"I don't like it, my love; I don't like it. You'll have plenty to do later, when we get the children over here. I think Robert had better go by himself to fetch them."

"But I should enjoy going. I've always wanted to see the Tyrol in the spring. And I'm so much intrigued by all these queer friends and . . . and their postcards."

"It's these queer friends and their postcards that I don't want you to see. I know what Sanger's queer friends are

probably like. You may depend upon it, they aren't fit for a decent young woman to associate with."

"My dear father! Do you really think I can't take care of myself? After all, I've been about a good deal, and I've met some pretty odd people. I don't suppose I shall be nearly as shocked at the widows as Uncle Robert will be."

"I daresay not. I'd rather you were more shocked. But you've lived a very protected life . . ."

"Father!"

This was an unendurable accusation and she looked very much hurt.

"But you have, my dear! And I can't help remembering how my poor Evelyn—I was very fond of your aunt, you know, Florence . . . she was younger than you, of course . . . but . . ."

"That was quite different. I don't see what can possibly happen to me if Uncle Robert goes, too."

"Well, well! We'll see. But you must really be careful in your dealings with any boon companions of Sanger's you may meet. They are probably the sweepings of the earth. Give me that postcard."

"All we know at present," she said, taking another look at it before she gave it up, "is that they are generous."

"On paper, Florence, on paper!"

"Really, sir, I think you are being unjustly suspicious. You are prejudiced because of Aunt Evelyn. But you know, I often wonder why you take it so for granted that she was miserable. We can't know. That sort of life is attractive to some people. There is something rather fine, when you come to think of it, about an uncompromising demand for freedom. Our life is, in a way, so cramped . . ."

He looked at her. From infancy she had always done exactly what she pleased with a persistence which belied the sweet placability of her manner. In the face of criticism or

protest she exhibited none of Evelyn's flaming defiance, only a pleasant disregard which had always vanquished him. Sometimes, viewing her unswerving pursuit of a chosen course, he was compelled to liken her to something slow, crushing, irresistible—a steam-roller. Already he knew that he would have to let her go to the Tyrol, and she talked about her life being cramped!

"I think, my angel," he said, rather testily, "that you scarcely know what you are talking about."

## CHAPTER VII

IT WAS eleven o'clock in the morning and Kate was busy chopping suet in the kitchen when Lewis poked his head round the door. He asked if there was any breakfast left in a tone which suggested that he did not suppose so. He knew that she would not let him starve, but he wanted, if possible, to feel aggrieved.

"Of course there is," said kind Kate. "Come and sit by the fire while I make you an omelette. I hope this means you've had a better night."

"No," he said gloomily. "I slept a couple of hours late this morning, and that was all. I was dropping off just when it was getting light, and then those bloody cow bells roused me."

"Oh, yes! They are driven up to pasture every mornin' at sunrise. We get used to it. Poor Lewis!"

"I've tried going to bed drunk, and I've tried sober. I can't sleep either way."

"It's shock," said Kate placidly, as she broke eggs into a pan. "Your nerves got upset when Sanger died. It's the same thing that makes Tessa and Sebastian sick. They've been sick, off and on, you know, ever since that awful night."

"I do know," he said with distaste. "It's impossible for any one in this house not to know how sick Tessa and Sebastian have been, off and on."

She dished up her omelette and gave it to him. Then she said, as she brewed some coffee:

"It's been very upsetting for all of us. Now I do hope you'll take a day off. You can't work while you are in this



state. If you try, you'll only have another sleepless night."

"I can't stop in the middle of a thing."

"You'll do no good at it."

"Mind your own business, Kate."

She excused his incivility on account of his interrupted work and bad night. He was plainly exasperated. Sanger's death had thrown him off his balance, a thing which happened easily at any time. There was nothing to be done for a man in this state. Her father had always been like this, possessed by a furious despair, when any unlucky accident pulled him up short in the evolution of a new idea; and her father had been serenity itself beside Lewis. She went on with her work, while he devoured his omelette, a savage, baffled expression on his white face.

Presently she said:

"I wish I could mind my own business. Here's Schenck wants me to join the company at once. I don't suppose he'll keep the place open for me. But how can I go until something's been settled about the children?"

"Wouldn't be a bad thing if you didn't go. It's not a good enough show for you. Chorus work will spoil your voice."

"It's the best I can get," she said with a sigh, "and I must do something. I'll risk its harming my voice. With luck it won't be for long. Schenck has promised he'll give me something better the minute it turns up."

"I daresay! He'll forget you in a fortnight. You see!"

"Jacob will jog his memory if he does."

"Jacob takes a brotherly interest in you, doesn't he?" said Lewis sourly, as he scraped his plate with a piece of bread.

He was determined to break down Kate's obstinate good temper, and observed with pleasure that this last taunt had wounded her. She flushed and he felt better.

"He's not a bad sort, Jacob," she pleaded. "He's been

very kind since Father died. You know I think he's really worried about Tony, and sorry, too."

"Sorry! What for?"

"He is anxious about what is to become of her."

"It's perfectly obvious what will become of her. 'Why couldn't he think of that before?'"

"Why not? Oh, Lewis! As if any of you ever did!"

"I don't know what he thinks he's after now," complained Lewis. "I know they make the house intolerable. What with Ike and Tony sparring in one room, and Linda throwing fits in another, and Tessa and Sebastian finding themselves unexpectedly indisposed everywhere, the place isn't fit to live in."

"Well, then, why do you go on living in it?"

"Me? Oh, I stay here for safety's sake. There are no opportunities for folly on the top of this mountain; and I'm just ripe to make a fool of myself if I get the chance. I'd better keep out of harm's way."

"Well, yes, perhaps," she said, considering his case.

"And I'd like, you know, to see Tessa safely settled somewhere. And Lina and Soo-zanne, of course. It would be a weight off my mind."

"Oh, what is to be done about them? Some sensible person must take charge of them. No, Susan! I can't have you bothering in my kitchen. Run along back to your mother."

"Mammy said I was to come down here for a bit," whined Susan. "She's getting up, and she's got Uncle Kiki in there, talking to her."

"Has she? Well, you can go and tell her that I won't have you here, and the sooner she takes herself off, and you, and him, the better pleased we shall be. She's no business here."

Such an explosion was unusual in Kate, but she was in-

dignant at the relations between Linda and Trigorin and their prolonged sojourn in the house. Linda was in no hurry to depart, as long as somebody else could be prevailed upon to feed her. She meant to remain until she was turned out, and she kept Trigorin, now hopelessly subjugated, at her side, in case of need. They were resented by the whole family, but Caryl, now the master of the house, was too much harassed and preoccupied to meddle with them, and was, moreover, a little embarrassed by Trigorin's generous offers of money for the children. Kate said to Lewis:

"It's a bit too much the way he's always in her room!"

"It keeps him out of all the other rooms," argued Lewis. "And that's something. For my part, she can have the flea-trainer as a gift, if she wants him."

"If only . . . Oh, Caryl! Is that you? Just come in here for a moment! Here's Schenck written to say he wants me at once. What am I to do? How can I leave the girls?"

"Oh, that's all right," said Caryl cheerfully, waving a letter in his hand. "That's quite all right. You can go as soon as you like. There's a lady coming."

"A lady!"

"Yes, and a man, too. The children's uncle."

"I know," said Lewis. "The Master. The man we all wrote to."

"Did you write?" asked Caryl in some surprise. "No. It's not him, but his brother. He writes this though. It's most liberal. He will take the children, Kate. He says we aren't to worry."

"But the lady," said Lewis, "is the wife of . . . which?"

"Neither. She's one of their daughters. By what I can make out they are coming quite soon."

"But is she married?"

"How should I know? He doesn't say."

"Because," said Lewis dubiously, "if she's only someone's daughter she may be quite a young lady. I wonder if she'll do."

"He seems to think so," said Caryl, glancing at the letter. "He says she'll advise about the girls' education. He says he recommends a good English school, but we must discuss it."

"A good English school!" exclaimed Lewis. "That would be better even than a convent, I expect."

"But you say they are coming soon?" began Kate. "They are never coming here? Not here! We've no room, for one thing."

"The man can have Father's room. And if you are gone, the lady can have your place in the girls' room," said Caryl.

"Oh, no!" Kate, thinking of the dirt and confusion in the girls' room, was positive that she could not put the lady there. "And Tony has taken to having nightmares; she screams and kicks anybody in the bed. They really can't come here, Caryl."

"Put the lady in Sanger's room," suggested Lewis, "and let the uncle share with Ike, and put Trigorin into Linda's room for good and all. That would be quite simple."

"Oh, but we couldn't . . ." began Kate, solemn and shocked.

"Of course not," put in Caryl with a frown. "Linda must go. She must go at once before this lady comes. And then Trigorin will go, too, and we shall have lots of room."

"I wonder how much it will cost you to get Linda out of the house," speculated Lewis. "A good deal, if she guesses you have reasons for wanting her gone in a hurry. She . . ."

"Look out!" whispered Kate, "that child . . ."

But Susan had already slipped off to report the news to her

mother. Lewis consoled them by saying that even if Linda did demand a bribe they could always borrow it off Trigorin.

"It's certainly a difficulty, their coming so soon," said Caryl. "But I shall be glad to see them. I'll hand the children over and get off. And Kate can go as soon as she has packed her things."

Kate went next day. To the last she was very much distressed to think of the discomforts which the lady would have to bear. She left a thousand instructions with Roberto, who gathered that Miss Churchill would want cups of tea and large cans of hot water every two or three hours. Caryl, who was much grieved at parting with his sister, decided to accompany her as far as Munich, where he would spend the night and return next morning. Lewis and the children came down to Weissau to see them off and the parting upon the landing-stage was very affecting. Kate broke down suddenly and began to sob with the strangled, speechless grief of a placid person tried beyond endurance. She stood, neat and stalwart, hiding a very red face in a clean pocket handkerchief, and grasping in her free hand a dress-basket and umbrella, until the boat came up and Caryl gently propelled her on board. He took her down to the little cabin, where she might recover herself, and neither was there to wave when the boat made off again across the still lake waters.

The children, contrary to their custom, did not cry at all. Kate's tears, the premonition that this tender and loving sister had abandoned them, shocked them too deeply. They watched the departing boat in silence, looking so small, pale, and forlorn that Lewis, who was in a particularly vile temper, began to swear at them. This revived them wonderfully. They went and bought bulls'-eyes at the village shop and then demanded that he should take them for a row on the lake, which he did in an old boat almost as big as the ark.

They paddled about in the sun, tried to race the steamboat on its return journey, passed the time of day with all the other pleasure parties, and finally took a bathe in full view of the chief hotel and the high road leading along the lake. To Florence, who was sitting on a bench by the waterside, they afforded much amusement, for they artlessly bathed in their skins and got dry in the sun.

"And one of them is quite a big girl, too," she thought, as Antonia climbed into the boat. "But it seems to be the thing here. And they look very charming, I'm sure."

She had just driven up from Erfurt with her uncle because the little train was so full that they could not get into it. Weissau was full of merry-makers as it happened to be a holiday. Along the lake road came a continual stream of people, all enjoying the lovely air. There were parties of sunburnt young men with knapsacks and ice-axes, and stout Germans in blue linen coats, and peasant girls in bright aprons and boys with flowers in their hats. Florence, who hated bank-holiday crowds in England, loved this one; she could even tolerate the Innsbruck shop people drinking beer under the trees in the hotel garden, because they looked so new, and were all so happy, and the day was so fine. Nine out of every ten who passed were carrying great bunches of wild flowers. The noise they made, the guttural, good-humoured shouts of laughter, the twanging of zithers and snatches of song from the boats on the lake, were enchanting simply because they were strange, and not the high-pitched cockney and the mouth-organs of Hampstead Heath.

Though rather tired with her journey, and glad to sit still, she was completely happy. Robert Churchill had gone into the hotel to order lunch and enquire the way to the Karinde-thal, and she was pleased to be rid of him. He did not share her enthusiasm for this beautiful place. All the way from England he had grumbled at an enforced uprooting in the

middle of term, and more than once he had tactlessly expressed a wish that his wife had been able to come with him. The crowds were, to him, a final source of irritation. The drive from Erfurt, through endless mounting pine woods, had seemed most vexatiously slow and expensive. Now he only wanted to get on to their journey's end, transact their tiresome business, and have done with it.

Florence, on the other hand, was continually blessing the chance which had brought them. Her joy had begun early in the morning when she woke up and looked out of her window and saw, through the chestnuts of the garden, the flowery meadows of the Innthal, flanked by far blue mountains. They woke in her an expectant rapture which was crowned by this vision of the lake. She could not look at it long enough. Sometimes the water was so still and translucent that the boats, hovering over their reflections, seemed to float on green air; and then an unexplained wind would brush it all silver, blotting out the lovely pictures of mountain top and sky which had rested for a moment on its clear, profound surface.

She hoped that the Sanger affairs might turn out to be unexpectedly complicated so that she might have to stay for a long time.

Presently she recognized, in a party approaching her, the delightful bathers in the old boat. They were walking up to the hotel, but there was no mistaking them. In their clothes or out, they attracted attention. Though dressed like peasants, they looked wilder than the wildest mountain people, and they were so much thinner. The young man was as lean as a scarecrow, and the children were mere shrimps. They walked, too, with lightness and pace, unlike the heavy-booted trudge of the Tyrolese. As they passed her she heard with surprise that they were talking English. The smallest of the girls was saying:

"Sebastian thinks he's going to be sick some more."

"Poor Sebastian," thought Florence. "He stayed in the water too long. Oh! Sebastian! Four of them! It must be!"

She started to her feet and pursued them, crying:

"Oh, I beg your pardon, but are you Sangers?"

The five of them turned, gaped, but at last admitted that they were.

"I'm your cousin," she explained. "I'm on my way to see you. Didn't you get our telegram?"

They shook their heads, perfectly dumb with surprise. She was, to them, a strange type, from her neat gray traveling hat and veil to her comfortable, expensive, low-heeled shoes. The children had never spoken to anything like her in their lives, and to Lewis she was an envoy from the past, the sort of lady who had domineered over his infancy but who was never allowed to interfere with him now. Sebastian was the first of them to recover. He gravely bade her welcome, and explained that they had been expecting her though they had received no telegram. Then they all shook hands.

"But how many of you are my cousins?" she enquired, looking them over and liking what she saw.

"All except him," calculated Antonia with a nod at Lewis.

"And you are . . . Caryl?" Florence spoke a little doubtfully, for as she framed the words she thought he looked rather too old to be Caryl.

"Oh, no!" he said hastily. "I'm no relation. Just a friend."

"Oh, yes . . ." she murmured in a tone that was a trifle chilly and yet not unfriendly.

"Mr. Dodd, Miss Churchill!" said Sebastian suddenly, recollecting the formula.

"Oh!" She sparkled and ceased to be chilly. "Is it Mr. Dodd? I think my father heard from you."



"Yes, I daresay he did," said Lewis, turning very red. "He . . . he hasn't come with you, has he?"

Florence suddenly remembered Robert and thanked heaven in parentheses that he had been inside the hotel when his nieces were bathing in front of it. She explained where he was, and suggested that they should all lunch together before driving up to the Karindehütte. They moved along the path, still rather shy and embarrassed. The children could not believe that they were really related to such a marvellous creature. They stared expansively. Lewis also took her in, a little more furtively, and she was put to it not to glance at him rather more than was necessary when she remembered that she was walking and talking with the composer of the Symphony in Three Keys.

"Bitter looking," she thought, ". . . and ugly . . . and so ragged! But what a charming voice! And very fond of the children, I think. Sixteen, isn't she? She doesn't look it. One must get rid of all one's prejudices to understand them. I do believe he's shy!"

He was desperately shy. But he was making a great and unaccustomed effort to be agreeable because he was anxious that the strange lady should be pleased. On inspection he had decided that she would be a most excellent person to have charge of his friend Teresa. At first he had thought that somebody less young and charming would better fill the part, but the efficiency and ease of her manners, the elegant common-sense of her dress, soon convinced him. Only it was a misfortune that she should arrive plump into the middle of them like this. He had meant to urge the girls to comb their hair before she came, and now it was hanging in a dripping tangle down their backs. And Caryl and Kate were away. And, when they got up to the house, there would be Linda. He could not think what Miss Churchill would say to Linda. She might, possibly, be so

much scandalized that she would pack up her gear forthwith and return to England without the girls. So he did his best to entertain her and make a good impression, speaking very quickly and stammering slightly as was his habit when particularly bashful. He explained how Caryl and Kate had gone to Munich.

Just before they got to the hotel he caught sight of two stout gentlemen coming posting along the valley road, who looked, as they got nearer, uncommonly like Trigorin and Jacob Birnbaum. They seemed to be in a great hurry and much agitated. He detached himself from the cousins and joined them.

"A telegram came, after you had all gone," panted Jacob.

"We thought we should open it. And then we thought we should at once come down and tell you. These English cousins . . . they will come to-day. We thought it might be better if we could warn you. You can tell them that they shall stay at the hotel."

"Too late," said Lewis. "They've come already. We've just met Miss. There she is."

"Ach!" said the other two, surveying the distant Florence in alarm.

"And she intends to come up to the Karindehütte after lunch. She says so."

"Can we not say that there is no room?"

"Sebastian told her that there was plenty of room. His neck ought to be wrung."

"Ach!"

"What about Linda?" asked Lewis anxiously. "Does she know? What has she done?"

"She has a headache; she has gone to bed," Jacob told him.

"I think she will stay there. One cannot be so barbarous as to pull her out, unless the English uncle will attempt it."

"Then let her stay," advised Lewis. "They won't know she's there. To-morrow, when Caryl comes, somebody can take the lady for a walk to look at the scenery, and we will eject Linda."

Uncle Robert had come out of the hotel and was being introduced to the children. Trigorin, who had been taking stock of the group, now broke in, exclaiming:

"But . . . but that young lady is clearly of the *beau monde*! *Femme parfaitement comme il faut*! It is unmistakable. How is it possible that she should stay at the Karindehütte?"

The other young men shook their heads. It scarcely seemed possible that she should. The prospect filled them all with a sort of panic.

## CHAPTER VIII

FLORENCE found the young Sangers quite charming. Uncle Robert did not. The beauty of the Alpine spring had not, perhaps, moulded his mind sufficiently; he showed no signs of sharing the gay serenity of mood which enabled her to find everything at the Karindehütte either delightful or funny. His new nieces especially appalled him; several times during that first lunch he had looked at their dripping hair and shuddered. And he had blenched at some strong expressions used by them when they burnt their mouths with hot soup. On the way out from England he had talked a good deal of inviting them for the summer to his bungalow at Tenby, that they might have the advantage of association with his daughters, Hilda and Betty. But Florence doubted whether this invitation would now be given. He admitted that the Sangers were handsome children, that they looked intelligent and enunciated their words very well, but that was the best he could say of them.

Nor was he moved towards the three young strangers, who looked, to his mind, very like a trio of young ruffians. And in this she was more inclined to support him. Even in her eyes the magnificence of the scenery did not perfectly excuse the raffish vulgarity displayed by Birnbaum and Trigorin. They were, she knew, the types of which she had undertaken to beware. Their disrepute was written all over them, and, remembering her father's warnings, his absurd apprehension that she might be in danger from such people, she hardly knew whether to be amused or impatient.

Mr. Dodd she placed rather differently, though he was, in

appearance, the least presentable of the three. The Symphony in Three Keys gave him the right to look like a tramp if he pleased. She could, however, understand why Robert had condemned him as the worst of the lot. He had been ostensibly rude, while the others were only too civil. His eagerness to conciliate the lady did not carry him as far as politeness to the old gentleman, and Robert Churchill's manner to a young man did not recommend him to one who had thrown off all authority at the age of sixteen. To Florence he remained courteous, and when she relieved his worst anxieties by a timely chuckle at Paulina's language, he gave her a swift smile, so intimate and brilliant that it startled her. Then he turned grave again and offered her salad in his shy, hesitating voice, so that she hardly knew what to make of him. Yet the charm of that smile remained the most real thing in an amusing but very unreal day. After lunch they drove up to the Karindehütte and were regaled, almost immediately, with another meal, a sort of supper, which was eaten in an atmosphere of tense, strained embarrassment. Every member of Sanger's circus, from Roberto to Susan, had become aware of the necessity for good behaviour. Their desperate efforts were rather exhausting and Florence retired early to sleep, in tolerable comfort, in the room which had once belonged to Sanger.

She awoke next morning in a mood of remote, impregnable happiness and, while she dressed, she looked out, in the pocket Shakespeare which always travelled with her, that passage in "The Winter's Tale" beginning:

Thou'rt perfect then our ship hath touch'd upon  
The deserts of Bohemia?

The deserts of Bohemia was an apt description of the place as seen by poor Uncle Robert. For herself the wilderness was flowering like a garden. The words of the scene still ran

in her head when, standing at the top of the stairs, she looked down and saw Lewis and the children eating their porridge in the hall. She remembered the warning:

Go not too far i' the land!  
This place is famous for the creatures of prey  
That keep upon it.

The mysterious lady who lurked in her room with a headache was very possibly a creature of prey. Nor did the term sit badly upon the two fat youths, the Jew and the Russian. But these amusing, pathetic children, this mild and bashful young peasant, with his wonderful talent and his gentle voice, were surely a nicer kind of inhabitant. They were with her inside the magic circle where all the world was gay and innocent and funny.

She had forgotten that creatures of prey have often an engaging appearance. Nor did it occur to her that their charm was largely due to the simplicity of their ideas. She, shackled in every thought by traditions, ideals, and scruples, was scarcely safe among them. For if beasts of prey are rapacious, so were these; if they are unmerciful, so were these; if they know no law save their own ungoverned appetites, neither did these.

If she had come down a moment earlier she might have heard some pretty language, for Lewis was out of humour. He had passed a bad night, his head ached atrociously, and he had come to breakfast in that sort of mood which always roused Teresa to call him their sunbeam. He succeeded almost immediately in making both the girls cry and even drew oaths from the placid Sebastian. But it is to his credit that he endeavoured to pull himself together when their lady cousin appeared. He talked to her quite politely if a little morosely, and presently began to explain the difficulty of producing Sanger's operas, a subject which greatly interested

him. The general atmosphere of the breakfast table brightened and grew more cordial. Florence knew a great deal about the difficulties of producing opera. In some ways she knew more than Lewis. She told him all about a new scheme for the State financing of British opera.

"I wonder that you had not heard of it," she exclaimed; and then, after a slight hesitation, she added: "It was started by my friend . . . Sir Bartlemy Pugh . . ."

She had many distinguished friends and she always introduced their names in this fashion in order, perhaps, to warn people that they must be careful what they said. But here her caution was wasted; Lewis, who shared Sanger's opinion of Great Britain, showed no signs of having ever heard of Sir Bartlemy Pugh, though as a musician he certainly ought. Nor was he quite as attentive as he should have been when she explained the scheme for endowed opera. He was just going to be rather rude about it when Teresa averted the catastrophe by breaking in and asking, with derisive solicitude, after his dreadful headache.

Florence did not altogether like being interrupted. She had a good deal more to say and this untimely intrusion of a child's banter broke up the conversation. Before turning to another topic she took silent stock of her young cousin, looking her up and down, and, for the first time, mentally separating her from the rest of the family. Decidedly she was the least attractive of them; in feature and person she might almost have been called ugly, though improvement was possible if, on a richer diet, she should take it into her head to grow. The meagreness of her under-nourished body contrasted ill with a certain amplitude of scale in her face, which was round and firm, with a finely curved chin and large, wide-set eyes. Her mouth was small, and, though the fullness of her lips gave it generosity, there was a sardonic turn about it which Florence did not like to see in so young

a girl. And her tone, when she asked after Mr. Dodd's headache in that pert way, was a great deal too assured and intimate.

It was a pity that he had a headache. Florence was very sorry to hear of it and recommended that he should dose himself with aspirin and lie down in the dark till it was better. This he agreed to do, but first he strolled out with her upon the mountain side in order to put in a good word for the girls. He informed her diffidently that they needed looking after.

"Oh, but that's obvious," she agreed with a laugh.

"It's not their fault, I mean," he said eagerly. "This house and the way they've been brought up. If you think at first that they are a little wild, you mustn't mind."

"Of course not. I think them such dears! They shall all come back with us and I'll find a nice school for them and for Sebastian, too. What a funny little boy he is!"

"Sebastian?" He looked blank. "A school for him?"

"He wants looking after quite as much as the girls."

"Perhaps. But schools! Some boys can't do with them. I doubt if he could. At the school where I was . . ."

He broke off, and she asked in amusement if he had not been able to do with his school. He told her that he had run away and that he believed Sebastian would do the same. He told her of Sebastian's recent excursion, which amused her very much, but she would rather have heard how old he was when he ran away and what he had done since. She steered the conversation in that direction and learnt eventually that he had been rather older than Sebastian, sixteen, to be exact, and that he had maintained himself by playing the cornet in a circus band.

"Afterwards," he said, "I wrote some pieces for that band to play. Circus music is a fine thing to write. Sanger says my style bears traces of it still."



"Like journalism," said Florence. "It will out, in an ex-journalist's work, however literary he is."

"I daresay," said Lewis, looking frightened.

He was not used to these parallels and hastened away lest she should try his wits too highly, with a headache and all. He spent the rest of the morning swallowing aspirin in a darkened room and thus missed the thrilling departure of Linda, Susan, and Trigorin, which shook the rest of the house like a tornado.

Caryl, on his return, was much shocked to discover that the English relations, upon whom so much depended, had arrived with so little warning. Linda obstinately guarded her room, and it was Birnbaum who hit upon the stratagem whereby she was finally ejected. He suggested that Trigorin should be asked to go, opining that Linda would incontinently follow rather than let him slip through her fingers. Caryl accordingly interviewed Trigorin and suggested, very civilly, that he might go down to the hotel since they were rather crowded by the unexpected arrival of the Churchills. It was a difficult thing to say, for they were all very much indebted to Trigorin, who had produced ready money, whenever it was required, all the time that he had been there. No one else had any, except Jacob Birnbaum; and he, though he could be generous on a large scale, had a curious dislike of parting with small sums. Trigorin had provided them with food ever since Sanger's death and he had lent Kate her fare to Leipzig. But he was most considerate and agreed to go at once, with many polite regrets that he had, perhaps, already stayed too long. Before he went he sought out Uncle Robert and handed him a cheque for £500, insisting that it was a privilege to do anything for Sanger's children.

"Never again," he said sadly, "shall I have a friend like Mr. Sanger. It is a great sorrow for me that he has died so soon when I come here. We have no time to speak of music,

as I have hoped. This shall be my return for the happiness I have had that he should ask me here. I cannot do anything else for him."

And he turned away, so much overcome that Robert did not like to argue the question any further with him.

Jacob was right. Linda no sooner heard the tidings than she sprang from her bed, declaring that she and Susan could not possibly stay in a house where they were not wanted. If Caryl insisted on turning her out she would pack up and go. And pack she did, in a kind of cyclone which ravaged the house and left it strangely bare. The family were so much relieved by these symptoms of exodus that they never enquired what she took with her, and it was not until much later that they discovered all that was gone. She took several valuable autograph letters, a presentation clock, a gold cigarette case given to Sanger by Wagner, and every small article of value that came in her way, including all the spoons and forks. Two men, summoned from the valley, staggered off down the hill with her heavy boxes on their shoulders and, half an hour later, she quitted Sanger's house for ever.

She came downstairs just as Trigorin was taking leave of the family in the hall. She had dressed herself in the deepest black; a long veil hung from her hat and hid most of her yellow hair. In one hand she held Susan, who was all tied up with black ribbons, and in the other she displayed a handkerchief with a black border. Roberto trotted apologetically behind her, bearing a green leather dressing-case. She looked so majestic and so mournful, so authentically widowed, that even Robert Churchill had a qualm of uneasiness and wondered if they were not treating her barbarously in insisting that she must go.

"Come, Kiril," she said to Trigorin. "Let's go. If I'm turned out, I'm turned out, and there's an end of it.

I'm not going to make a fuss, though there's some that might."

She had determined, apparently, to take no direct notice of the Sangers or the Churchills, and when Susan gave a loud sniff she said to nobody in particular:

"She's crying for her daddy, poor little mite! You wouldn't think, the way she's treated now, that she was his favourite child. Come, lovey! We aren't wanted here. Will you carry my dressing-case down the hill for me, please, Kiril? Roberto has it."

Trigorin looked doubtfully at his own suitcases, but made an effort to comply. He was wrestling with the problem of picking up all three at once, and Linda was half out of the door when the scene began. Antonia darted forward crying:

"You mustn't take that! It's my dressing-case."

"What's that?" exclaimed Linda, coming back. "You give it here if you please. It's mine. I've had it these five years."

"'Tisn't yours," cried Antonia, snatching it up and dodging round behind Birnbaum. "It ought to be mine. It was my mother's."

"What's that got to do with it?" retorted Linda. "It's mine now. Your dad gave it to me. You give it back directly!"

"I won't! You're a thief!" screamed Antonia. "He never gave you my darling mother's things. You stole them."

"Tony! Tony! Let her have it," whispered Birnbaum. "It is old . . . not worth fighting for. I will give you a better one."

It was indeed old—a perfect derelict of a dressing-case—so stained, scratched, and battered that no self-respecting woman would have cared to claim it. There were marks on it of every haphazard journey taken by Sanger's circus for

the past seventeen years. But, as Antonia held it up for the others to look, there was discernible a faint E. N. C. stamped on the side.

"Evelyn Napier Churchill!" she said. "That's my mother."

Robert remembered it. He and Charles had given it to their sister on her twenty-first birthday; he recalled, with a curious pang, the shop where they had bought it, and how they had decided that the clean, plain beauty of ivory fittings would suit the fastidious Evelyn better than the glitter of gold or silver.

"Yes, it is hers," he said. "But it must be quite worthless by now. Let her have it, Antonia!"

He wanted, at any cost, to end an intolerable situation. So did everybody but the chief combatants. Antonia clung to the dressing-case and cursed Birnbaum for interfering. Linda, having worked herself up into a fine rage, was prepared to let them have a piece of her mind.

"I don't leave this house without it!" she shouted. "You call me a thief? What are you, I should like to know? You turn me out. You treat me as if I was a tart. What better are you? Tell me that. And what better was your mother? Think I don't know. . . ."

"Tony! Don't listen to her! Don't answer her!" exhorted Florence, for Antonia was preparing to fly at Linda. "Come away!"

"Don't you worry with her, miss," advised the woman. "She's not fit for you to touch, not by a long chalk. She's an artful little . . . and no better than what she should be. You ask Mister Birnbaum there if . . ."

"Here's the bag," cried Caryl, snatching it and hurling it at her, while Florence and Birnbaum forcibly held Antonia down. "Take it and go, for goodness sake! You'll miss your train."

"Yes, madam! You'd really better hurry," advised Uncle Robert, who, watch in hand, was trying to be impressive and gentlemanly.

"Go?" finished Linda. "Yes, I should think I am going! I wouldn't stay here for anything in the world, not with all I've seen going on. But if you're all so particular I wonder at you for bringing the young lady here, for it's nothing better than a dirty case house and never was."

And with that she took herself off. Trigorin, after some frenzied antics, managed to pick up all the baggage and followed her without further farewells. Three times during the first hundred yards did he drop one of his burdens, while the family, utterly shattered by the storm which had gone over them, watched him from the window. Sebastian remarked with some glee that he had panted and puffed a good deal when he first came up, but that he would find going down even more strenuous. Linda's black, fluttering draperies disappeared round the first corner and a sort of sigh passed through the group of children. The resolute enmity died out of their faces; they had detested her for eight years and were now prepared to forget her in as many minutes. When, for the fourth time, Trigorin dropped something, kind Caryl would stay no longer; he went out and carried the disputed dressing-case to the bottom of the hill where a peasant's cart was awaiting the travellers. On their way down Trigorin said several times how sad it was to end a visit which one had greatly desired to make.

Up at the house Florence was the only person who could not share in the general rejoicings. She was conscious of having lost a little of the morning's enchantment. She could not be quite sure, now, that everything at the Karindehütte would invariably amuse her. The struggle over the dressing-case had been rather horrible in the light which it cast upon the more intimate history of Evelyn Churchill. Nor was

there anything funny in the reflection that Evelyn's children had grown up under the dominion of a foul-tongued harpy. It was no wonder that nice Mr. Dodd felt anxious for them; she began to understand his assurance that "the household" was not their fault.

But the harpy had now flapped her black wings and sailed away and the creatures of prey about the establishment were fewer by two, not counting Susan, who was obviously a harpy in embryo. The young Jew remained, but he was not really so bad, and was, moreover, quite genuine in his offer to pay for Sebastian's education. It was determined, in a consultation among the elders that afternoon, that the four children should be removed immediately to England, and, in the autumn, should be put to school. Robert could recommend very highly a small preparatory school for Sebastian, and Florence was all for sending the three girls to Cleeve Ladies' College, where she had received her own education. Robert had his doubts about the wisdom of this, but, since his chief objection was that no reputable establishment would take them, he was overruled. Florence knew Cleeve; she vowed that, as nieces of Charles Churchill and daughters of a musician of dawning fame, they would be welcome at her old school. Cleeve, she said, would overlook a great many shortcomings in such a case and her father would use his influence. There seemed to be more real difficulty in the task of persuading the girls to go. They pulled very long faces when they were told of the arrangements which had been made for them.

"But you will enjoy it," said Robert encouragingly. "You will make plenty of little friends and you will learn how to play games."

This mystified them very much; it was the last thing they would have expected to hear of any school. They explained that they knew how to play games. He tried to convey to

them some idea of the importance of games in an English school and they became very dismal indeed. Antonia stoutly declared that nothing would induce her to play games. Her sisters, being children, might submit, but she was grown up and would have everybody know it. She was too old to go to school.

"In England the big girls all play," Robert assured her. "My little daughter, Hilda, is older than you; she is seventeen. And she loves her school and doesn't want to leave it. She's captain of the school hockey."

The four looked at each other, and though they were too courteous to say so they feared that their cousin Hilda must be a terrible simpleton. Sebastian said at last:

"Well, thank you very much. We'll think it over. I suppose it will do if we let you know by to-morrow?"

"Let us know! What?" asked Robert, gaping.

"If we want to come. Of course we see it's most kind of you to think of it, don't we, girls? But we'd like a little time to consider it, you know."

"If you want to come! My dear boy! You'll do what you are told, let me tell you. It's no question for you to decide."

"I think it's more important to us than to anybody else," argued Sebastian. "We may not like going to school."

"That will be excessively foolish of you, but I doubt if it will otherwise have any importance whatever."

"We don't belong to you," stated Sebastian, still pleasantly reasonable. "I mean, there's no law, is there, to give you power over us? Nobody made you our guardians, did they?"

"Er . . . hmph . . . um!" snorted Robert, who had no answer ready.

Florence stifled her laughter with a violent effort, for she knew that this question of legal guardianship was, to his

cautious mind, a grievous problem. She made a sign to him and said:

"Yes. Talk it over and we'll discuss it again to-morrow."

"We'd like to consult our friends," explained Teresa.

"Your friends!" exploded Robert. "May I ask what friends are those? Mr. Dodd! He has nothing whatever . . ."

Again Florence checked him.

"I expect you'll find Mr. Dodd thinks it a very good plan," she said. "But do ask him."

Later she said to her uncle:

"It's much better to avoid trouble if possible. They'd better think that they are going to school of their own choice; it will dispose them to try and adapt themselves. And it will do them no harm to talk it over among themselves."

"I don't agree with you, Florence. It's high time they learnt to do what they are told without cavil or question. They haven't the slightest idea of discipline."

"They'll learn all that at school, poor dears! They don't recognize the shades of the prison house yet; they think they are their own masters. It will come by degrees. I don't want any battles till we have got them all to England."

"I never saw more impudent, ill-mannered, disobedient young people in all my life. It's not their fault, of course. But their language, my dear Florence, is outrageous! And what morals can they have growing up in this place? 'Pon my word, I doubt if we are justified in turning them loose in decent schools. I wouldn't have Hilda associate with that girl Antonia for the world."

"She struck me as no worse than the others. Now Teresa . . ."

"She's the eldest. And she's spent her life in the society of depraved people. You heard what that woman said."



"That woman," said Florence, with a shudder, "was a horrible, obscene creature. I don't think you need quote her."

"It's quite probable that she spoke the truth for all that. Look at the sort of people the poor child has knocked about with. This Dodd . . ."

"I think better of that young man than you do," said Florence. "And I can tell you this. He's most anxious that they should go to school. I'm sure he'll advise them sensibly about that. He's devoted to them."

And she was right, for he did advise them very sensibly. They had, however, no opportunity for consulting him until late in the evening, for he was away all day in the mountains trying to walk off his sleeplessness. When he came back he brought with him a little Persian kitten which he had bought at a farm as a peace offering to the girls for his recent ill-humours. They were in bed so he took it up and gave it to them.

"Oh, Lewis," began Teresa at once, "wait a minute! We want your advice. Florence says we have to go to school in England."

He sat down on the edge of the bed where Teresa, Paulina, and the kitten lay curled up in a little heap.

"I expect you'll like that," he suggested.

"Oh! Do you really think we shall? Tony! Do you hear that? Lewis thinks . . ."

"Yes, I heard," mumbled Antonia from the other bed. "I don't want to hear what Lewis thinks, or what you think, or what anybody thinks. I shall decide for myself."

And she hid under the bedclothes.

"I think it would be a very good thing," Lewis told them. "Perhaps you won't like it at first. You may find that you are a little different from the other women, but you must try to get on with them! You must indeed. It's a good thing,

you know, to be like other people if you can manage it. It's happier . . ."

Teresa thought this such a mighty odd thing for Lewis to say that she sat up and kissed him, murmuring:

"Who'd have thought it!"

He sat a little longer, stroking her fair hair and feeling suddenly quite wretched at the idea of parting with her so soon. He had not thought of separation in his anxiety for their welfare. But perhaps he might come to England and pay them a visit. He suggested this and they brightened up: school as he described it did not sound so very bad, after all. In another half minute he was meaning to go across to his room in the annexe and begin upon his arduous night's toil. But he kept putting it off, though all the time, as he solaced himself with Teresa's company, his mind was circling round the labour to which he must shortly address himself. To stay and stroke her hair was a little respite. He was still there, staving off the evil hour, when Florence came with a candle to bid her cousins good-night. She heard him say:

"And then I expect they'll teach you needlework. And you'll make yourselves the most lovely dresses."

"Oh, Florence," cried Teresa. "Here's Lewis says we must certainly go."

Antonia poked up her head in order to see what was happening. She had a faint idea that Florence might not be pleased to find Lewis there, although he was giving them such good advice. But of this there was no sign; Florence opened her eyes for a second or two and then smiled at him very kindly. He, on the other hand, was visibly deranged. Antonia observed with amusement that he was staring at Miss Churchill as though he had never seen a young lady in her dressing-gown before.

And it was improbable that he had ever seen one quite like that. She was lovely. Her dark plaits, her moccasin slip-

pers, the Paisley shawl flung round her blanket-wise, all gave her a boyish look, like a decorative, fairy-tale Red Indian, scarcely older than Antonia. Lewis was positively frightened. He had thought her beautiful before, but he had thought it without emotion. Now he was aware of a most disturbing revolution in his system; it was as if the terrific energies scattered by the shock of Sanger's death were again focussed upon a single object, as if the storms of the past weeks had been but the prelude of this significant event. The thing took him perfectly unawares. He jumped up, stammered a good-night to them all, and withdrew hastily before his confusion should be betrayed.

That night he did no work, though he flung up and down his room for hours, endeavouring to think of his lost Concerto and haunted instead by quite other visions. He wished that he had gone away before this cousin of Tessa's had come to disturb him. He had told Kate that he was just ripe for folly; at no time in his life had he been overwise. But never, never had he fallen a victim to so inconvenient an obsession as this.

## CHAPTER IX

FLORENCE woke every morning, rapturously, to the tune of cow bells. For a few minutes there was a great din all round the house as the beasts were driven up to pasture, and the shouts of the herd boys echoed across the clear dark air in the valleys. Then the scattered tinklings grew fainter as the cows strayed across the mountain.

She had dragged her bed close to the window, and from her pillow she could see the pale pink tops of the range opposite and the long shafts of light which the rising sun sent down their steep sides, spearing right down into the hidden mysterious night below. Day began at the Karindehütte a full hour before it visited the valley farms.

Never, since her childhood, had she lived so completely for the present, grudging every passing moment that brought her nearer to the inevitable return. It was an interval of utter contentment which seemed to have no relation to the rest of her life. She had a curious feeling as though this sensation of exquisite irrelevance was the result of living so high up; she was beautifully isolated on the top of her mountain. When she went back to England she supposed that she would take up again the threads of her real life, her elaborate interests and pursuits, just where she had dropped them. She could not hope to take back with her the inconsequent gaiety, the freedom of spirit, which had come to her as she sat by the lake at Weissau. They belonged to the place. Nor did she contemplate a return, another year and in other company; some joys can never be recaptured. She was so much aware of the impermanence

of her pleasure that she was no sooner awake than a longing would seize her to jump up and run out into the mild warmth of the early sun. She was often dressed and ranging over the pass before Roberto, crying "*Scusa!*", burst into her room with the enormous tea-pot which he believed Kate to have said that the English lady would require every morning at seven o'clock.

She was preparing to begin the day with one of these early expeditions when Antonia knocked at the door and asked if she might come in and talk a little.

"What lovely brushes!" she said, inspecting the dressing-table. "You do keep your things nicely. Linda had gold ones, but she never washed them. Listen, Florence! I don't mean to go to school. Why should I? I'm grown up."

She was wearing a very short and ragged nightgown and looked anything but grown up, but Florence was too wise to say so. She agreed sympathetically that it would be more difficult for Antonia than for the others.

"Lewis says we'll like it. But what does he know about it? He's never been to a girls' school himself."

"What sort of people does he belong to?" asked Florence, who could not resist an opportunity of finding out more about him.

"Oh, I don't know. He never speaks of them. I only heard him speak of his home once, and then he said they had boiled mutton and caper sauce every day there. I expect that wasn't true."

"Still, even if they had it every other day, it might seem rather intolerable to a budding ascetic . . ." mused Florence.

"A budding . . . ?" began Antonia.

But she did not ask what an ascetic was, in case Florence should say she was ignorant and needed to go to school. Instead she cried appealingly:

"You know . . . I should just hate to play hockey."

"Well, my dear, if you really hate it very much, we might arrange something else for you. But I think you must go somewhere to learn to earn your own living and be independent. It's not easy for unqualified women to get posts."

"Why should I earn my own living?" asked Antonia in great astonishment.

Florence, with considerable delicacy, brought her to understand her penniless and dependent situation. She became very thoughtful and then asked slowly:

"But who will pay for us at school? That will cost a lot."

"Mr. Trigoris and Mr. Birnbaum have been very generous. . . ."

"Ike!" She swung round in amazement. "He's paying?"

"Ike?"

"Jacob Birnbaum. We call him Ike. You say he's paying?"

"Yes. For your brother . . . and for you, in part, as well."

"I won't have it!"

"My dear child! What do you mean?"

"I won't go to England if Ike pays. I won't swallow any food that Ike pays for. I'll starve. I'll . . ."

"What has he done?"

"Done? It's what he is! He's a stupid beast. He's cruel!"

"Why, Antonia . . ."

"I hate him. I wish he was dead."

"Has he . . . has he treated you badly in any way?" asked Florence very gravely.

Antonia pulled herself up and said loftily:

"Oh, no! He couldn't. He's too stupid. But I won't have his money. He's a dirty Jew."

"But why are you so indignant? He was your father's friend."

"That's nothing. So was Sanger a beast . . . often. And I'm not indignant. He's beneath my notice. I never think of him at all. When I look at him I just laugh."

"Well! You're a difficult girl to understand."

"He thinks I ought to go to school, does he?" stormed Antonia. "He thinks I don't know enough and ought to be taught some more? He thinks a deal too much. He's a walking mountain of impudence, that man! He shall hear what I think about it before he's an hour older. School!"

She made for the door, but Florence held her back, exclaiming:

"My dear Tony! He's probably asleep at this hour."

"Oh, no! He gets up early and helps Caryl and Lewis sort Sanger's papers."

"Well, then, do put on some more clothes, if you must go and insult him."

"Clothes? I've got a nightgown."

"That's not enough. Really and truly, Antonia, you must be rather more decent in your language and deportment. He'll only tell you that you are an ignorant little girl who needs to go to school because she doesn't know how to behave."

Antonia was struck by this view. She marched off to the girls' room and, to the astonishment of her sisters, made an elaborate toilet. She scrubbed her face and hands and combed her hair. Then she selected from the common wardrobe on the floor a passably clean frock and apron. Jacob, who was alone in Caryl's room when she came to him, was as much surprised by her inordinate neatness as by her offering to address him. For some days past she had refused to answer when he spoke to her. She began, as carelessly as she could, balancing on the table and swinging her long legs:

"Well, Ike! I hear you think I need to be sent to school. That's lovely and generous of you, but as it happens I didn't ask for your kind charity. You can keep your wonderful money, that you think such a lot about, for some other girl. And be careful how you go spending it, for it's the only thing that makes anybody look at you."

"You will go to school if your uncles wish it," he said in a surly voice.

"I tell you I'd sooner be dead than kept by your money, so there!"

"And you shall tell this to the English uncle?" he jeered.

"I will."

"He will say, but why is that?"

"I'll tell him. I'll tell him everything."

"Then he will send you away, as he sent Linda. He will throw you out of the house. Your lady cousin also . . ."

Antonia turned pale. She still, despite the warnings of experience, believed what was said to her. She said, a little uncertainly:

"I'll tell them it wasn't my fault. I'll say you made me so drunk I couldn't help myself. You know you did."

"Did I force you to stay a whole week, eating, drinking, spending my money? That was your own wish. You could have left me at any time. They will ask why you did not."

"I stayed just to show you how little I cared . . ."

"Tell them that! And see what he will say."

"I don't mind if he does throw me out. I hate everyone here."

"How will you keep yourself? Will you work? I think not. You will starve."

She had a private idea that she could without difficulty become a famous prima donna. But the constant raillery which her family poured upon this ambition had taught her to keep it to herself. She was tired of hearing Kate exalted.



She said at once the thing which she thought most likely to torment him:

"I shall get another lover and live with him."

Jacob, his large face pale with fury, was silent for a few seconds, hesitating between a choice of outrageous replies. Then he said with a sort of anguished bitterness:

"You will run away from him after a week?"

"No, I sha'n't. I'd have stayed longer with you, only I wanted to be back for Sanger's birthday. I was enjoying myself."

"But were you? Yet you would not come back?" he cried, catching at a new idea.

She said instantly that she would, mocking his self-flattery in supposing that she hated him. No! She would not run away again, unless she met somebody nicer. That might, of course, be soon.

He reflected that if she came to him a second time she would not run away because she would have nowhere to go. Sanger's circus, her only home, was breaking up. She would be, this time, defenceless and altogether at his mercy. He could make her pay a little for her insolence. Since she would not love him, he might find some relief in seeing her suffer. The idea of all that he could do to her filled his imagination with a dark happiness. He turned his back and began tying up bundles of papers, afraid to look at her lest she might read his purpose in his eyes and run away.

"I would rather be with you than in England," she said.

"That is well."

"And I like München."

"You will not go there; it is too near. Your uncle might follow us. This summer I go to Smyrna and you shall come with me."

He stole a glance to see how she took this, but was obliged to turn quickly away, she looked so young and so white.

"Oh, yes . . ." she agreed in a very little voice. "You're sure that . . . that it would be quite convenient to you?"

"I wish it," he said grimly.

"Because . . . if it wasn't . . . I expect I could get work or something. I'll only come if it's convenient to you. I don't want charity. I should think I'd be rather in your way in a place like Smyrna. What did you say?"

He had thrown down his bundle with an oath of renunciation. For he could not do it. Two minutes was the longest space of time in which he could really wish to treat her unkindly. Struggle as he might, he could not help but love her dearly. He gave it up. Cruelty was not natural to him, in any case, and he could often have wished himself a baser man than he was, bewildered by the strife between his appetites and his intrinsic benevolence.

For an instant he stood quite still, regarding curiously the abyss which had for a moment invited him, as a man on the edge of a precipice will play with the idea of a plunge and pass on unscathed. Then he wrenched his mind away from it and forgot it. He said:

"We will not go to Smyrna. You must not think that your uncle will turn you out of the house. I was laughing at you. You need not be afraid; he will protect you. And your cousin will be sorry for you, I think."

"Fool!" taunted the almost vanquished devil within him. "Imbecile! You have lost her."

"I should advise," he continued valiantly, "that you confide in her. It is a pity that you had not such a friend earlier."

"Florence!" cried Antonia, blushing as red as a poppy. "I couldn't possibly tell her."

"Then tell him. He will never turn you out. I am the person whom he will blame."

"You? Aren't you giving him a lot of money for us? I don't see he'll have any business to be blaming you."

"He will think that I am a villain. And that is right. I have seduced you."

"Really, Ike, you mustn't talk like that. I don't blame you for that, indeed I don't. There's quite another thing that I can't forgive you for; not that. You mustn't worry."

"I thought," he said, almost to himself, "I thought, if it was not I, it would be some other man. I never meant you harm. How could I know that Sanger would die and leave you with no home? Now what is to be done?"

"There's nothing to be done. It's no concern of yours, Ike. It wasn't your fault that Sanger died."

"But it is my concern. I wish that you would go to England as your uncles have decided. It is safer . . ."

"That's what Lewis says. But I can't let you pay . . . after . . ."

"Why not? How shall I ever understand you?"

She was silent, but she looked more friendly. He still had a hope that he might persuade her to go to England. He shyly ventured to assert a fact which had dominated his horizon since his first conscious thought.

"I have so much money!"

"Have you always?" she asked with vague interest. "Or only sometimes, like us. I know you had a lot when I was in München."

"Always," he said solemnly. "More than I can spend."

It meant very little to her. He had seen that in Munich, and it had continually exasperated him. For though she had snatched at the good things he gave her, he could not persuade himself that he had bought her. She would take nothing away with her, scorning his lavish offers of clothes and jewels. It was the Sanger spirit of conviviality which brought her. She would have been quite as ready to enjoy

herself if he had been a poor man; if he had lodged her in a garret and taken her to the cinema instead of the opera.

It was this lordly relish for life, a fiery abundance of spirit enriching everything in its orbit, which had first attracted him to Sanger. He now saw it repeated in Sanger's children. To himself money had always meant too much; it pervaded his entire existence, intervening and robbing him of the full fruits of experience. It had furnished him with all his assets, his pleasures, and the position which he held in the musical world. In moments of depression he was inclined to fear that it had provided his friendships; he used to wonder how many people would have tolerated him without it. He had the instincts of a patriarch and would have liked to beget children and found a family, a household, but he had purchased so many women that he despaired of finding one who was not venal. His short association with Tony had taught him that she was neither sensual nor mercenary, and that, in her least thought, she was guided by an impulse which had been denied to him. She demanded only to feel; she asked of life only that it should play a tune to her dancing. A queer wife she would be! A darling wife! The dearest company in the world for the man who could win her love. To have her confidence, to cherish and protect her and give her everything she wanted, to set safeguards about her incautious, headlong career, seemed to him a most satisfactory ambition for a man. His own money would be a benediction, if he could spend it so.

"You should get a husband who will be kind to you," he told her. "You must not waste your beauty always upon lovers. You should have a home and little babies of your own."

She gave him a quick look under her eyelashes, but said nothing. She had fine, slender hands like her mother. He stood looking at them now. In many ways she was like Eve-

lyn; she had that spark which sets men aflame. It was not only in her beauty, it was in her voice, her laugh, her smallest gesture. It was her portion in that dower of genius which belonged to all her kindred, she carried it like a torch. Beside her he felt like a senseless clod of earth, lacking life, for she was like fire, wonderful, dangerous, necessary. He thought of the children he desired and it seemed to him that they, too, would be dull creatures unless they were also hers. He was wearied of his life. He was no longer young, now that his friend Sanger was dead. He had exhausted the distractions which wealth could bring him; he had nothing to contemplate now but the things that he could never do, the limitations which age would increase. She seemed to offer him escape. He wanted to make her his wife and get children by her, new patterns of his youth, bolder creatures than himself, who would accomplish things that were beyond his striving. Yet she hated him. He had wronged her. The love which should have saved him had made him wretched. He said imploringly:

"Could you not marry me? Indeed, I love you. I would try to make you happy."

"Ike!" She sprang off the table. "What's come over you? Are you drunk?"

"I am not. I mean it. I want you for my wife. Marry me, and then you need not go to England. You cannot wish to go to England. I would give you . . ."

This invincible instinct for a bargain betrayed him; he knew it, almost as soon as the words passed his lips. Quick alarm leaped into her eyes and she moved away from him, asserting:

"I want to go away and never see you again."

"Oh, Tony, tell me! You torture me. Why are you still so angry? You say that you can never forgive me; and then you say that I must not blame myself. Why can you not forgive me?"

"For being such a fool!" she said furiously. "For being so stupid. Couldn't you have seen . . ."

Her lovely eyes filled with tears. She wept for a few minutes, quietly and bitterly, almost with resignation. He would have soothed and comforted her if he had known how, but he dared not touch her lest she should turn on him. He watched her with a torn heart as she sobbed, a little turned away from him, her face hidden in her apron. Presently she made an end of it and looked round, exclaiming in surprise:

"Why, Ike! Are you crying, too?"

He discovered that there were tears on his own face, and, producing a silk handkerchief, he mopped them up in some embarrassment.

"What's the matter?" asked Antonia tactlessly.

"*Du lieber allmächtiger Gott!*" shouted Jacob. "Have I not said? You torture me. Always you are angry and you will not say. How shall I know what you are thinking? You drive me mad."

"Really you are very stupid! Listen! I'll tell you. When we were down in Genoa, and you asked me the first time to come to live with you, I said I wouldn't. You remember?"

"I remember."

"And then I said I would. Do you know why? Because you looked so very sad. I was very fond of you, then; I wasn't going to have you as unhappy as that. You really looked as if you didn't know how to get on, unless I came. That made me more fond of you; I mean, that a very clever person like you with everything so grand as you have things, should need any one like me to look after him. Do you understand that? But then you annoyed me by boasting about how wonderful everything was at your house and all the things you'd give me. You didn't think that I was going

to give you anything; you didn't seem to think I could love you. Really, I might have been Linda! You quite disgusted me. I thought you didn't deserve I should come. And I meant to tease you a little before I had it out with you."

She looked ready to cry again. Jacob, seeing dimly the quarter whence the blow was coming, sat down by the table and hid his face in his hands, bidding her, in a muffled voice, to continue.

"I thought . . . I thought I'd stay a week, and to punish you I'd never be at all kind until just the end. And the last day, when you would be thinking I was going away, and would be very sad, I'd tell you quite suddenly that you were my dear lover. Then you'd know better for ever afterwards. I planned I'd tell you when we were out shopping or something, quite casually, so you'd hardly know at first whether to believe it. I thought it would be such fun. But . . . you spoilt it all."

"I understand."

"You see, I quite trusted you. I thought you'd wait till . . . till I was ready. I never thought you would play me a trick as you did. It was horrible of you. You couldn't have loved me."

"I did love you. I do now. I always shall."

"If you had, you'd have known. You'd have waited. I can't forgive you for being such a fool. I loved you. I came to München because I loved you. And all of a sudden you turned into an enemy; it nearly killed me."

He said nothing, but stared at her in such palpable misery that she could not endure it. She continued consolingly:

"I'm not angry now. I see you're sorry. You can't help being stupid. I know you didn't mean to be unkind." And then, a little anxiously: "Don't look like that! It's worse than when you were in Genoa. Let's quite forget it."

"I cannot."

"Well, don't look so dreadfully unhappy!"

"There is cause," he stated.

"There's no cause, silly! I've forgiven it."

"I do not forgive myself."

"You can't really be trying then."

"How can I? Consider! I love you. And you have told me how by my own folly I have lost you."

"Soon you'll forget me."

"Never in life."

She looked him over doubtfully and said, after a long pause:

"I believe you're right. I can't bear it; you sha'n't go on looking like this. Would you like it if I married you?"

"If I would like it! But you must do what is best for you. You should, I think, go to England with the uncle."

"But, Ike, I don't want to go to England with the uncle."

"That name! Must you call me by that name? I detest it."

"Very well then, Jacob! I don't want to go to England with the uncle. I'd rather stay here with you, because when you start looking as if you'd got toothache I feel as if I love you too much to leave you. Now try to look pleased. Haven't I said enough? What more do you want?"

"You have said quite enough."

But he took a little time to cheer up and explained to her, after a pause, that his head was thick and resisted a new idea. Also they had traversed so many emotions in half an hour.

"Methought I was enamoured of an ass," she quoted fondly.

"You were. You are. You must never expect too much of him. I will interview the uncle immediately."

"Well, don't boast," she advised him, "and perhaps he'll believe you. *Herr je!* This has been quick work!"



They had certainly accomplished a great deal in a short time. Gradually he got more accustomed to these strange, new altitudes which they had achieved, where Tony, with the adaptability of her sex, was already trying her wings. Her delightful security cheered him up, and by the time that Lewis came in, bearing another basket of unsorted letters, he looked like a happy man. Lewis gaped at them, muttered an apology, and was for withdrawing, but they called him back and informed him of their betrothal. He thought that they must have gone out of their senses and was, moreover, much irritated by their complacent appearance so that his congratulations were not given with much warmth.

His own infatuation gathered strength with every day that passed, and with every faint attempt to get the better of it. There was nothing to soothe it in the spectacle of Birnbaum kissing Tony. He stalked off, back to the annexe and the Concerto in which he seemed to be stuck fast as in a frightful quagmire. Very bitter were his inward comments upon the folly of Jacob in thus sacrificing his independence for the sake of a chit not worth the little finger of Florence Churchill. It was absurd to marry Tony. For the other lady such a sacrifice might possibly be considered, though the idea was a wild one. Something must be done to abate this fever, for he was beginning to fear that he might go clean distracted. He was ready for a desperate remedy.

He had asked himself more than once if it was possible that she should be accessible on any other terms. And always he decided that it was not possible, though she was ready, surprisingly ready, to make herself pleasant to him. He could have sworn at times that she was no better than the others; that behind her gentle affability there lurked a discreet invitation. But a certain unfamiliarity in the style of these veiled signals disconcerted him and caused him to

doubt his own perceptions. It was in fact the first time that he had been pursued for his intellect rather than his person, and the shy creature scarcely knew what to make of it. He wondered if she would have him, if he proposed marriage to her.

"It is better," he said to himself, "it is certainly better to marry than to burn, as Moses puts it."

He was rather pleased with this quotation, dimly recalled from his childhood when he had been made to attend a Sunday school. And of the party at the Karindehütte it is probable that only the despised Robert could have corrected his impression that Moses said it. For Florence had not, unfortunately, read her Bible with quite the same intelligence and attention which she accorded to other and inferior books.

## CHAPTER X

LATER in the day Antonia sought out her uncle and confided to him all those circumstances which delicacy had prevented her from mentioning to Florence. The ensuing uproar took some days to subside, for the Churchills were divided in their view of the affair, and Charles, in England, was written to passionately by both parties. Robert was the least surprised of the two; he was scandalized but resigned. An hour with Sanger's circus had put him in a frame of mind to expect any sort of discovery. Having enquired into the circumstances and intentions of Jacob Birnbaum, he was disposed to make the best of a bad business and consent to an immediate wedding.

Florence, on the other hand, was astounded but inclined to be compassionate. Jacob was clearly an unprincipled scoundrel and poor little Tony a victim, undeserving of the punishment implied by so iniquitous a marriage. She should be taken to England and helped to live it down.

But Antonia blankly refused to go to England. She persisted in saying that she loved Jacob, and that she wished to marry him in spite of his villainy. No persuasions had any effect on her.

"He's not a bad man, really he's not," she protested. "You don't understand, Florence. He meant no harm. He thought that if it wasn't him it would be somebody else."

"Tony! How can you?"

"Well, that's the way he looked at it. You don't understand the way things have been in our family. He thought

it might as well be him as Lewis, or anybody else staying here . . . .”

“Lewis!”

“Of course it wouldn’t be Lewis, as a matter of fact, because he’s different; I mean we’ve known him so long he’s almost like our brother. But what I mean to say is, that Jacob is no worse than heaps of other people.”

“Yes, I should have thought Lewis Dodd was different.” mused Florence in a low voice.

“It’s Tessa he belongs to,” Tony informed her vaguely. “And, of course, Tessa’s too young really to have a lover. At least, she’s only just grown up, you know.”

Florence smiled to hear the infantile Teresa described as only just grown up. The halo which, for her, illumined the name of Lewis Dodd glowed a little brighter at this artless testimony. Antonia continued, by way of explanation:

“Linda tried to get him once. We all saw. And when he wouldn’t have her she was so spiteful. I think he despises love, though of course . . . .”

She checked herself, which was, perhaps, a pity, for Florence was left with the impression that this young St. Anthony, despising love as it was known at the Karindehütte, had eschewed it: a regrettable error. Antonia had been about to outline his sentimental career, so far as she knew it, when a most ill-timed discretion shut her mouth. She had not meant to praise him when she said that he despised love; friend though he was she considered such an attitude to be very shocking. She was convinced, though she could not put it into words, that no sort of love ought to be despised, since, in spite of its rude beginnings, it is the first source of civility. But then, civility was, to Florence, a commonplace; while to Antonia it was a thing rare and admired, so beautiful as to cast a radiance upon its own base and humble origins. Only she could not explain herself.

And Florence, for her part, could not have understood. She had for the shortcomings of humanity that universal, almost scientific toleration which is based upon wide reading. No previous experience helped her to understand Antonia's point of view. She listened with growing bewilderment to an unskilful account of the visit to Munich, the quarrel, and the reconciliation. Being herself temperamentally chaste, she had no rancour against people who were not, and regarded them with a sort of uncomprehending pity. But this affair implied an equation which was outside her knowledge. It was with a gesture of puzzled resignation that she yielded at last, when Charles telegraphed his consent to the marriage.

She could, in any case, spare little time to Antonia's problems, for her own life was proceeding at such a pace that she could scarcely keep up with it. One or two attempts she had made to ignore the thing that was happening to her or to give it a rational interpretation. It was possibly the mountain spring which had invested the world with this new glory and freshness. It was the escape from a life which had begun to confine her. It was anything but the company of Lewis Dodd. So she reasoned until, suddenly, he took his departure. For three days he went away, flying to Innsbruck in a final attempt to break the disastrous spell which had bewitched him.

Florence, who thought for sixty hours that he had gone for good, found that all the beauty round her had become, in the twinkling of an eye, most intolerably sad. She was astonished, humiliated almost, at her own pain, and unable, any longer, to blind herself as to its cause. She was in love; her happiness was gone with him, and she would leave the Tyrol with a wounded heart.

Then, as suddenly, he reappeared. He had not found it possible to remain away and so came back with the single

intention of possessing her at any cost. She was amused at her own joy and relief; amused, too, when she reflected that for a year or more she had quite earnestly wished to feel all the pains and anxieties of a serious love affair. Her only care now was to drill herself into the thought that he might not, after all, have returned to woo her. Yet she knew not how otherwise to interpret the absent-minded persistence with which he followed her about. Sternly she forbade to herself the pleasure of romances woven for the future; hourly she broke her resolution. It was so impossible not to make plans. Because, of course, she had determined to marry him.

He belonged, probably, to a different class. But she could put up with that, and if her family minded it they must learn better. Like her Aunt Evelyn, she was very democratic. He was a great genius and that ought, surely, to be enough for them. His manners, though primitive, were simple. She tried to imagine him in dress clothes; he would look odd, but not like a waiter. Charles would have to see that she could not be expected to marry anybody ordinary. And for him, if she could but bring him to her views, so much might be accomplished. She had a feeling that he might at first be restive, he was so wild and shy. She believed that he loved her, but she had an idea that the thought of marriage had not, so far, entered his vague head. She would have to put it there. Later on, when his music had been heard rather more, he would need a wife with a certain social standing. She had influence; she knew people. Married to her, he also would know people.

Only one person at the Karindehütte was in the least aware of the state of things between these two. The household, for the most part, was entirely absorbed by the undetermined fate of Antonia. But Tessa, at this time, grew very pale and melancholy. She feared that her friend

meant to entangle himself with the English cousin, a piece of folly in itself, and likely, as she thought, to involve them all in the most serious consequences. It would be a climax of the disasters which had befallen them since Sanger's death. She unburdened her mind to Paulina one day, as they lay out in the forest. They had been discussing Antonia's marriage and Paulina was saying:

"I think it's an excellent idea. Couldn't we all marry somebody and then we needn't go to England?"

"Sebastian couldn't."

"No, but if we were married women, he could come and live with us. Let's get married, Tessa! I'll marry Roberto. I'm sure he'd be quite pleased. He's very obliging."

"Twelve is too young."

"Soon I'll be thirteen. Juliet was thirteen. She was married."

"She was Italian."

"So would I be Italian if I married Roberto. People always take their husbands' nationalities."

"Imbecile that you are! That's got nothing to do with it."

"Don't be a wet blanket! We'd much better both get married. I'll ask Roberto and you ask Lewis. What have you gone so red for? He's very nice; I'd ask him myself only he loves you best."

"I'm too young."

"Not a bit. You can ask him anyhow."

"Oh, I couldn't! I'm too old."

"Too old! I thought you said you were too young!"

"So I did. Dear me! I'm both. I'm at a perfectly horrid age. I'm too old to say what I think. And I'm too young for anybody to want to marry me."

"There, now, you're blushing again! You'll be worse than Kate soon. She used at least to blush regularly; I mean

always at the same sorts of things. But you've taken to blushing at nothing at all. You're dreadful."

"You wait till you are my age. You will, too."

"Still I can't see why you should think you are too young for Lewis. You'd suit him much better than an ordinary woman that expected him always to be bothering about her. . . ."

"Would I? Look!"

They were sitting at the edge of the forest, near the bottom of the mountain. Teresa pointed to the field below them where two figures were strolling intimately. Paulina took them in and asked anxiously:

"Do you think he wants her?"

Teresa nodded.

"But he wouldn't marry her!" protested Paulina.

"Yes, he will. She'll make him."

"He's never married anybody before."

"Yes, but she's a lady. If it's anybody like Florence, they have to marry them. Look at Sanger and our mother."

"But she won't have him," persisted Paulina hopefully. "Why should she? Think of all the grand people she knows. She's just being nice to him, like she is to everybody."

"I wouldn't mind his getting her," said Teresa sadly, "if that was all there was to it. But that will only be the beginning, you see! She'll want to take him off and live at that place in England where she comes from, Cambridge. He won't be happy."

"I think it'll be a shame if he gets her. She can't have seen him drunk."

"Of course she hasn't. He's not been drunk since she came."

"And she can't have seen him in a temper. Really in lots of ways he's worse than Sanger. He's not so good-natured, for one thing. Tessa, do you think we ought to tell her?"



"Tell her what?"

"That it wouldn't do at all. There are heaps of things. . . ."

"I can't," said Teresa, who had gone very pale.

"Why not? If she knew . . . ."

"I don't know why not. But I couldn't."

"Well, it would be rather like telling tales. He belongs to us, really, more than she does. Perhaps she'll find out herself."

This was said in a very low voice for the pair were quite close to them. They were picking flowers of different sorts and saying at intervals that they had got enough, and then crying out over a good one that must be picked.

"Oh," cried Florence, flinging herself down on the grass beside the girls, "did you ever see such flowers? They beat even the Academy pictures of 'Spring in the Austrian Tyrol.'"

"What are you going to do with these little things?" asked Lewis, dropping gentians into her lap, one by one.

"Put them in a dish of moss on the hall table."

"Very tasteful! Tessa! Why have we never put dishes of gentians on the hall table before?"

"Because we don't want them," said Teresa coldly.

"And," Florence was saying, "I must take a lot of roots home. Why is that cow bell sometimes A and sometimes A flat?"

"It isn't the same cow," he told her. "There are two cows on that little hill, but you can't see one because it's behind a rock. If you'll move a little this way I'll point it out to you."

"I'll take your word for it," she declared lightly, moving a fraction of an inch farther away from him. "How lovely the cow bells are! I love waking in the morning very early and hearing them all round the house, don't you?"

Lewis was about to agree fervently when he caught Paul-

ina's eye and remembered that he had in her presence expressed himself very freely about the cow bells which woke him early in the morning. He subsided and lay back, flat on the grass, staring up into the sky and smiling. Florence continued to talk. She said how the silent nights impressed her. A distant waterfall was the only thing to be heard in the hushed spaces round the Karindehütte after the cows had been shut up.

"And running water is an enchanting sound," she said. "The most beautiful in the world, don't you think?"

"When I was a boy," said Lewis abruptly, "I used to sleep out on some cliffs in Cornwall. And there were some birds, whole flocks of them, I d-don't know what they were, used to fly out to sea just before it got light. I remember I woke up once, when the moon had set and it was quite d-dark, and all the air was full of them. I couldn't see them. I heard wings. . . ."

Teresa, on the grass at his side, stirred a little in response to the excitement behind his hesitating, drowsy voice. She knew that some impulse had prompted him to tell them of a supreme moment, one of those instants, rare and indescribable, when the quickened imagination stores up an impression which may become a secret key to beauty, the inspiration of a lifetime. Her mind swung back to meet the mind of that lost boy who had lain awake upon a high mysterious cliff beside a whispering sea. She, too, heard wings.

Florence was interested, also, and asked if he had lived in Cornwall. No. He had gone there in the holidays. Did he live in the country?

"N-no. In Bayswater."

He got up. It was evident that he did not like being asked about his childhood, so she desisted. She rose, too, and they made their way up the hill towards the house. The girls remained sitting on the grass, occupied with rather gloomy

thoughts. At last Paulina looked sharply at her sister and said:

"There's no use crying about it."

"No use," agreed Teresa.

But the tears poured down her face, whether she would or no, until she conceived the happy idea of trying to water a primula with them. Immediately the flood was dried, after the manner of tears when a practical use has been found for them.

"And it would have been interesting," said Paulina sorrowfully, "to see if it would have made any difference to the primula."

## CHAPTER XI

IT WAS discovered that Jacob and Antonia would have to be married in Vienna, owing to their complicated nationalities, and they would have to stay there at least a fortnight before all the preliminaries could be got through. Robert Churchill considered that it was his business to escort them.

"Though it will be very disagreeable," he said gloomily to Florence. "But I feel I must go. I don't altogether trust that young Jew. I must make sure that he really does marry the girl this time. But it keeps us here so long; that's the worst of it. And I don't like leaving you here alone. When is that fellow Dodd going to take himself off? I wish Caryl would give him a hint."

"He's quite harmless."

"I don't know so much about that. Personally, I've taken a great dislike to him. A very great dislike. He's the worst of the ragtag and bobtail we found hanging round here. The other two, the Russian and the Jew, I can place. They aren't Englishmen, and they aren't gentlemen, and I don't particularly take to either of them, but they are types I can recognize, and it takes all sorts to make a world. Now what I can't stand in this Dodd is that he fits in nowhere. He's got no ties . . . no laws. A disagreeable brute! What's an Englishman want with this sort of life?"

Florence smiled. It was so typical of Robert to despise a man because he resembled nobody else. She felt that it was perhaps time that she should break a lance in her lover's defence.

"I find him very interesting," she said. "He's strange.

I've been wondering about his origin. He speaks like a . . . like an educated man. I'm inclined to think that he's of humble birth, a peasant, perhaps, but that he's mixed a good deal with cultivated people all his life. He must have raised himself. . . ."

"*Raised*," said Robert. "He looks like a scarecrow! What on earth do you see in him that you could call raised?"

"Well . . . there are his wonderful gifts. . . ."

"Presumably he had those to start with. I should have said that they didn't seem to have raised him at all. You can't be serious, Florence! The fellow is a most terrible boor . . ."

"In a way . . . he's an ascetic."

"Humph!"

"Asceticism and Bohemianism are very much alike," she told him with energy. "St. Francis of Assisi was a true Bohemian. Great simplicity of mind is almost incompatible, in a way, with a high degree of civilization. I was thinking, only last night, of that story about Shelley, I think it was Shelley, walking stark naked into a house and through a room with a dinner-party in it, because he had lost his clothes out bathing."

"Well," said Robert, "from the point of view of the dinner-party I can't see that it mattered whether Bohemianism or asceticism prompted Shelley to do that."

Florence was so sure that he never made a joke that she failed to catch the gleam in his eye when she told him that, from the point of view of literature, it mattered a great deal.

"Maybe!" he said. "But even if Mr. Dodd does resemble Shelley in that respect, I doubt if my nieces will be any the better for his acquaintance. However, I'm taking Antonia with me, and she is our heaviest charge."

She could not help being sorry for him, foreseeing an uncongenial fortnight in Vienna. The party set off next day

and were accompanied by the whole family as far as Innsbruck. The children, with misplaced cheerfulness, had taken it into their heads that this was an occasion for rejoicing; as Sebastian put it, the Sangers did not often have weddings. They insisted upon all kinds of hilarious celebrations and the day had a sort of opera-bouffe atmosphere which made it particularly trying to their uncle, who saw nothing festive in this tardy removal of a blot from their scutcheon. They began by narrowly missing their train down to Erfurt, owing to a scene with Teresa and Paulina over their toilets. They had discovered a number of black garments, inexplicably left behind by Linda, and had thought that they might as well go into mourning for their father. They appeared, after everyone else was ready, dressed like little widows, with skirts down to their toes and long crape veils floating from their hats. They were immensely pleased with themselves, twirling this way and that, to exhibit their draperies, but the rest of the company did not receive them kindly. At length they were forced into other clothes and the whole party ran irritably down the hill to Weissau.

By the time that they were sitting at lunch in Innsbruck, Florence felt that the expedition had already lasted a week. Her heart sank when she contemplated all the hours of noisy junketing still before them, for they were to see the travellers into the Vienna train at two o'clock, and their own return to Erfurt was timed for six. She could not imagine how they were to spend the intervening hours; the day was scorching and the change from the upland air oppressed her. Glancing at her companions and aware of the wild effect they all produced, she wondered whether her own father would have recognized her, meeting her thus. But she need not have been alarmed. There was nothing of the travelling circus in her own appearance. She was, as always, neat and charming. Her dress was admirably chosen to stand the exposures

of such a day, being plain, cool, and of a soft cream colour which showed no dust. To Lewis, staring at her furtively between mouthfuls of soup, this trim freshness was a mystery. He did not trace it to her clothes, but only knew that she looked as different as possible from the Sanger girls. Tony, for all her unquenchable beauty, looked bedizened and outlandish. Her silk frock was much crushed and her hair hung down in wisps under a magnificent new hat. As for her little sisters, they might have been pulled through a hedge backwards.

The meal was long, and the children ate a great deal and drank freely, and became increasingly noisy and ribald. Uncle Robert at length put an end to it. He cut short their final rather tipsy attempts to toast the bride by declaring that the train would be in, and hustled them out into the suffocating sunshine of the street. Once in the shelter of the station he was able to detach himself and register luggage in seclusion. His feelings were thus spared during the final scene, for the children no sooner saw the train which was to take their sister away than they set up a loud howl at being parted from her. Antonia also wept, but more quietly and with a remarkable effort at self-control; she was really anxious to do right in the eyes of her cousin Florence, for whom she had conceived an ardent and humble admiration. She kissed all her family very often and promised to send them a picture postcard from Vienna. She kissed Lewis and invited him to come and stay with her as soon as she had a house of her own. Finally, and with a certain shyness, she kissed Florence, murmuring:

"Dear Florence! I'm so sorry to be saying good-bye to you. And I'll try to remember what you said about not swearing, only in my bedroom. . . ."

She and Jacob hung out of the train, waving gaily as it rattled out of the station, while Uncle Robert hid in their

compartment, feeling for them all the bashfulness which was not included in their natures.

The rest of the party felt decidedly flat after their orgy of emotion. They straggled out into the station square and the children began to demand that they should all go to the cinema. This was, to their minds, a good finish to a joyful day, but their elders did not agree with them. Caryl, perceiving dismay in the face of Miss Churchill, tactfully proposed a separation. Lewis should show her the sights of the town while he escorted the children. They could all meet again for the six o'clock train. This idea was warmly seconded by Lewis, who relished the prospect of an afternoon alone with his lady and was impatient to begin it at once. But Florence felt a little sorry for Caryl when she thought of the probable atmosphere of the cinema and the unruly state of the children's spirits.

"That is really an excellent young man!" she commented, looking after them.

"Excellent!" said Lewis. "Where shall we go?"

She unfurled her parasol and said that she would go anywhere cool. The day was too torrid for intelligent sight-seeing. Were there no shady gardens where they might sit? Lewis said he thought not. He said that they might have a look at some churches if she liked. He thought that a nice empty church would suit him better than a public garden, though, even if he succeeded in finding one and luring her into it, he was at a loss how to proceed. He had never imagined that any woman, especially one so kind, should be so difficult of approach. Her virtue frightened him at every turn, and he was beginning to wonder desperately if she would go away back to England, beyond his reach, before he should have plucked up the courage to make love to her.

Occupied with these reflections he walked moodily beside



her while she steered herself and her parasol through all the glaring, crowded streets. She was intensely interested in all she saw, stooping to peer into courts, and up at archways, and asking him all sorts of questions which he could not answer. But they got at last into a quieter thoroughfare, and he, seeing a promising looking church in front of them, pointed it out to her, saying that it was, he believed, an interesting old place. She was surprised, for it looked dull.

They passed into its cool gloom and wandered about, staring at tinsel-bedecked shrines. He exerted himself to talk in the hope that two women kneeling before the Altar of the Sacred Heart would take it into their heads to get up and go. He discovered an ancient screen carved with figures of local saints and began feverishly inventing legends about them. She listened attentively, wondering why it was that he should suddenly know so much. But he kept it up until one of the women had left the church and the second was on her feet, collecting an umbrella and a string bag full of parcels. She stumped away down the aisle, and Florence was preparing to follow when he caught her arm, declaring that she had not yet seen the font. He tried to lead her up towards the high altar.

"But is it up there?" she asked in astonishment. "I thought it was always down the other end of the church."

The woman had splashed herself with holy water, and crossed herself, and was out of the porch. Her footsteps rang on the pavement outside and died away. Lewis was left at last alone with Florence in the dark, silent church. He wished, in despair, that she was not so good. His methods were swift and a little arbitrary, but he had never met with any serious resistance. He looked at her doubtfully. She was asking what there was, specially, about the font.

"I l-love you!" he exclaimed nervously.

She started and looked at him in grave inquiry. 'Then she smiled enchantingly and said:

"I'm glad to hear it. I love you."

"Oh!" he said, rather taken aback.

For the candour of this unsolicited avowal he had not been prepared. His own statement had been made as a sort of preliminary explanation, paving the way for an embrace. Her response, though it might be called encouraging, was so unexpected as to chill him a little. But having cleared his first fence he had better go on. He took her in his arms with a roughness which testified at once to embarrassment and unschooled desires.

In the desert emptiness of her mind, whence thought and sensation had retreated like an ebbing tide, a single bleak idea stood forth, a rock till then submerged and now revealed, for a timeless instant, to the daylight. It was an understanding of his essential hardness, a knowledge that this man who held her so close was indeed no tender lover but a stranger, as cold as ice and harder than a stone. Then her true self, her generous love, returning, flooding her soul, bore down upon that frightful image and drowned it in night for ever.

She heard fresh footsteps in the porch and tried to release herself, with a faint sigh of protest. He let her go. She sank upon a bench and hid her face, for a moment, in her hands.

Lewis picked up her parasol and her gloves and her hand-bag and placed them carefully on the bench beside her. He was cursing his folly for beginning this business in so inconvenient a place, where they were liable to constant interruption. A woman had come in and was doing the Stations of the Cross, so there was little hope that they would be alone again. He should have curbed his impatience. He thought of solitary places in the mountains behind the Karindehütte and marvelled at his own imbecility. What was he, now, to say or do?

He sat down beside her and waited for a lead. Presently she turned round and smiled at him. She had recovered her poise and her regard was clear and happy. Again he was smitten by a profound uneasiness. She was so astonishingly honest. She was like nobody else. She seemed to have no scruple in hiding what she felt, and he realized that she had been speaking the truth when she declared that she loved him. And because of that she would believe anything that he said.

"She's like a child," he thought amazedly. "She's like my poor little Tessa."

This was nonsense. He knew that she was not in the least like Tessa, save for a look in the eyes which had disarmed him. But in his mind, certain ideas were always connected with his friend, thoughts of kindness, pity, and obligation, which now came over him. This woman, because she loved, was innocent, sincere, and defenceless, like Tessa; she was insecure, like Tessa. All that he felt for Tessa seemed to stir in his heart, forcing him to an extreme compassion for Florence. He swore to himself that he would never make her unhappy, and knew in the same instant that he was bound to do so. He had already discovered that he could not leave her. He fell back upon the only solution which occurred to him, a course which he had already contemplated in some awe and dismay. He said in great haste:

"How soon can we be married?"

He would marry her and he would always be kind to her. That was the best he could do. What was she laughing at?

"I'll marry you," she said, "whenever you like. Lewis . . . tell the truth . . . it had only just occurred to you, hadn't it?"

"Oh, no," he declared untruthfully. "But I ought to have mentioned it earlier. Florence! As soon as we possibly can."

He took her hand and kissed it. His boats were burned.

Once outside in the sunlight and traffic he could hardly make out how it had happened. The thing was absurd, unforeseen and unreasonable. But irrevocable now, and, on the whole, very pleasant. He was betrothed. Also he was very thirsty and was on the point of suggesting that they should go and have a drink somewhere when it occurred to him that she probably took tea at this hour. With a first conscious effort at adapting himself to the demands of a new life he took her to the restaurant where they had lunched and ordered coffee.

"Have some cake," he urged. "Have one of those pink cakes."

He was so nervously eager to offer her the right thing that she laughed. She was sure that he had never fed a young lady with pink cakes before, and indeed he never had. Their coffee came, and she took off her gloves and poured it out, sitting opposite him, smiling her happy, tranquil smile at him across the table. He gave her back a glance which he felt to be very domestic and husbandlike. He felt as if he had been married already for quite a long time; as if his old, untamed existence was so long ago as to be almost legend. But a little bit of the legend was still alive, as he soon discovered, when he caught the eye of Minna Gertz, who was drinking with some students in the corner by the door. Minna was an old flame of his, the daughter of an innkeeper at Erfurt. Two years before, when she served in her father's house, Lewis had been used to spend many pleasant hours in her company. Now she had migrated to the town and wore very fine hats and long boots buttoned up to her knees. She remembered him quite well though, because he had given her a pair of garnet earrings, and because he generally was remembered by people who had come across him, sometimes kindly, sometimes not. Minna was kind to everyone,

but she despised him a little for being so poor. Seeing him now in the company of so beautiful, so obviously well born a lady, she opened her eyes very wide indeed and grinned at him expansively behind the lady's back. He nodded an amiable greeting. Florence turned round to see what he was smiling at, and looked a little surprised. He explained:

"That's Minna Gertz. Her father keeps an inn between Erfurt and Weissau. I've stayed there."

Florence bent upon Minna that serene, interested scrutiny which she accorded to every new thing, observing her predecessor as if she had been a piece of architecture or an Alpine plant. She had the clear impersonal vision which is the fruit of an unshaken sense of security. Untouched, as yet, by any of life's betrayals, she could observe the world around her with a detachment impossible to her young cousins. They, with senses quickened to danger, would demand, of every strange thing, if it could hurt them and whether they wanted it.

She did not form any very favourable opinion of Minna, and thought she should have stayed in her father's inn. But she said:

"It's a pity they are giving up the peasant dress; it suits their build. That girl in Tyrolese dress must have looked comely, but in that hat you see all the coarseness of the peasant type without its rustic charm. But I suppose to her it's progress of a sort."

Lewis said that he supposed so. He did not feel equal to discussing Minna's progress. He was busy proving to himself that marriage with Florence would not greatly derange his life. He did not want much; he could live quite contentedly anywhere. To make certain of this he announced that they would live in England when they were married, because it was a part of the world which he had formerly avoided.

"If you like," she said. "Your . . . your people live in England, don't they?"

"My . . . Oh, yes!" he agreed, looking startled.

"In London you said?"

"Yes."

"I don't want to bother you to tell me if it's difficult. And nothing can make the slightest difference. But it's better for a wife to know, don't you think?"

"Know what?"

"What sort of people her husband belongs to. I haven't the vaguest idea about yours, Lewis, and you know all about mine."

"My family are very disagreeable."

"Yes?"

"That's all."

"What do they consist of?"

"I've a father and a sister. My father was a school inspector. Now he's a Member of Parliament. And he writes books. Two a year. Little text books and outlines of things, for schools and working men who want to educate themselves. Science and English literature and our Empire and those things."

"Oh! Can he . . . is he . . . any relation to Sir Felix Dodd?"

"He is Sir Felix Dodd."

"W-what?"

"He is Sir Felix Dodd."

She was petrified with astonishment and could only sit gaping at him.

"Know him?" he asked pleasantly.

"My father knows him."

"I'm sorry for your father then."

She knew that Charles hated Sir Felix Dodd; he was always abusing him. They sat on many boards together,

for the school inspector M. P. was a power in the educational world. Charles had dubbed him Fulsome Felix and avoided him as far as possible.

"Good heavens, Lewis!" she stammered, "I can't . . . I never . . . how very strange! I never knew Sir Felix had a son, at least . . ."

She remembered now that she had heard of a son who was a terrible scamp, and must not be mentioned in the presence of anybody connected with the Dodds. What nonsense people talked!

"I mean I never knew his son was you."

"Why should you?"

"Oh, it's the sort of thing one ought to know. You see, I'd heard your Symphony; but somehow I'd never connected . . ."

"It's natural. They don't boast of me, I imagine."

"But . . . but . . . I know your sister then, by sight, anyhow. Millicent, isn't she? She was at college with me; but not my year. She sings, doesn't she? Gives ballad recitals?"

"She may. She always fancied her voice."

"And then she married . . . oh, who? . . . Somebody in the Foreign Office . . . Simnel Gregory . . . Oh, Lewis! How extraordinary this is! I never thought . . ."

Lewis, for his peace of mind, did not grasp the full significance of it. It did not seem to him very important that Florence already knew all about his people. He said impatiently that he had quite lost touch with them and she wisely let the subject drop. Later on she would make him tell her what the trouble had been. And then, when they returned to England, she would smooth it all out. They must be brought to forgive him, whatever he had done.

For herself this news was a great blessing. She would not,

after all, be forced to scandalize her family. She was radiant, as they set off for the station, feeling that life had been very good to her.

"I'd have married him," she thought, "if his father had been the hangman; but this does make a difference . . ."

Charles would not be overjoyed to hear that she had selected Fulsome Felix for a father-in-law, but he would prefer him, surely, to the hangman!

They met Caryl and the children waiting for them on the platform. Lewis, still intent upon glueing his hand to the plough, informed them cheerfully that he was going to be married. Their faces fell, and Paulina at once exclaimed:

"You won't marry Florence!"

"Yes, I shall," he said, too wise to ask why not, in case she might come out with any of the obvious objections. "Yes, I shall, sha'n't I, Florence?"

"It looks like it," agreed Florence.

She flushed a little under the dismayed stares of the Sanger family. She could have wished that Lewis had not announced the engagement in such a hurry. Caryl was the first to recover, after an ominous pause. Rather faintly, he hoped they would be happy.

"But are you sure it isn't a mistake?" began Sebastian. "All right, Caryl, you needn't kick me! I wasn't going to say anything. All I mean is, don't do it in a hurry. Hadn't you better . . ."

"That's our train," interrupted Caryl. "Let's make a move. Come, Tessa! What's the matter with you? Have you got a stitch?"

Teresa was sitting on a bench, apparently in great pain. She was rocking up and down with both hands over her heart. When they asked what ailed her she lifted a face so blanched and drawn that she looked like a little old woman. With some difficulty she pronounced the words:



"Too . . . many . . . ices . . ."

"You poor little dear!" cried Florence, bending over her in concern. "Where's the pain? In your chest? Can you manage to get home, do you think?"

"No," said the rude Teresa, pushing her off. "I'll have to . . . die . . . on this bench."

"She gobbles them so," explained Sebastian. "I knew she'd be sorry after the ninth."

Between them they got her into the train and stretched her out on the seat of a carriage. When she was thus comfortably arranged, she sighed and fainted. The train started before they could bring her to.

"She's very blue," said Florence anxiously. "It looks more like shock than anything else. But I suppose nine ices would account for it. Put the window right down, Caryl, so that the air blows in on her. Nine ices!"

"I'm very sorry," apologized Caryl. "I didn't know it was as many as that. Ike gave them money just before he went."

He had his own opinion, which was, by the way, the opinion of Paulina and Sebastian also, as to why his sister had turned blue. But the experience of a short and eventful life had taught him to hold his tongue.

"She'll have to be carried up the hill to the house," declared Florence. "She can't possibly walk up after such a bad faint. What a day!"

## CHAPTER XII

JACOB and Antonia did not consider that Uncle Robert made a very good third upon their wedding trip. His inconvenient sense of decency threw a guilty gloom over the whole affair. He insisted that Jacob should put up at a different hotel, and he could not stomach the idea of any combined pleasure parties.

A growing partiality for his niece did nothing to mend matters. He had always been kind to her, and the pretty creature had taken it into her head to behave so charmingly to him that she was fairly irresistible. At the moment she was all for copying her cousin Florence, so that her manners in public did not shame him as much as he had feared. Her dress was neat and quiet, she drank little, laughed with circumspection, and took real pains not to talk with her mouth full. Robert was no longer tortured by the idea that she might be taken for his daughter; at the end of the fortnight he might almost have liked it. She had a way of crossing the crowded lounge of their hotel which might have deceived an expert, it was so quietly and competently British.

Nothing occurred, however, to make him grow fonder of Jacob. On the contrary, since it was impossible for a man of Robert's mind to be lenient towards the pair of them, every passing grace exhibited by Antonia threw a blacker shade of villainy upon her lover. Social intercourse between the three was in consequence very uneasy. Robert held himself ready to escort his niece upon shopping expeditions, and even showed an inclination to visit the opera, but he did not

ask Jacob to come with them. Yet, as the pair were officially betrothed, it was but reasonable that they should occasionally be allowed to meet. Antonia was, therefore, permitted to entertain her cavalier at tea in the afternoons, while her uncle went for a walk by himself—a compromise which interpreted Robert's notion of reasonable chaperonage.

"But it's stupid!" said Antonia the day before the wedding. "Why can't we all go about together and enjoy ourselves? We could have such fun."

"He cannot endure the company of a wicked man like me," said Jacob gloomily, searching his pockets for the brooch that he had bought for her that morning.

He had nothing to do in the mornings except buy gewgaws for his love and every day he offered her something to console her for the tediousness of this interval.

"He's no business to then," said Antonia, bristling at any criticism of her property. "He hardly knows you!"

Jacob laughed and produced the brooch, which he pinned into her dress with a display of sentiment which would have been very distasteful to Uncle Robert. Everybody else in the hotel lounge knew at once that the pair were betrothed, and that the young Jew had brought a gift for his bride, but Tony was not so English that she minded this.

"I do think," she said, "that he might let you come when we go buying clothes. You will have to look at them when I wear them, so I think you ought to choose them."

"And I am paying for them," he reminded her.

She did not object to his paying for them now they were to be married. Nor did she wince at his frequent references to the fact. She just took it as one of the sort of things that Jacob was liable to say, the sort of thing that so palpably upset Uncle Robert.

"Yes," she said. "But he doesn't know that."

"That is very simple of him," observed Jacob. "Who

should pay for them? He knows you have not a krone of your own."

"Florence gave me some from her father. And he has no idea of the value of things. I told him I had enough to buy all the things on the list she gave me, and he swallowed it."

"Your cousin has made you a list?" asked Jacob eagerly. "That is good! She has style. Until you have more experience you cannot do better than to copy her. Later, I think, you should not dress quite so quietly. I shall take you to Paris in the autumn and have you dressed in the way I should wish. Have you the list there? Let me see it!"

"I began it," said Tony, "and then she looked it over."

She gave him the list, which began in her own childish scrawl and was finished in the neat, scholarly script of Miss Churchill. He chuckled when he saw that his bride had intended to buy "six or seven hats, one gold evening dress with a train, and shoes with red heels," but had overlooked the need for any underclothing. Florence had modified various items and added a detailed catalogue of lingerie.

"Is two dozen chemises enough?" he asked, planting a fat forefinger on the list. "When my sister married I remember hearing them speak of twelve dozen. You must have what is correct."

"She says it's enough for an English girl."

"She should know," he agreed.

And he continued to scrutinize the list, making very frank comments, until Uncle Robert wandered unhappily into the lounge, a grizzled, meagre presence, exhaling that mixture of superiority and suspicion which mantles some Englishmen abroad. Antonia, prompted by some sprouting social instinct, no sooner caught sight of him than she snatched the list away from Jacob with a hasty warning in a slang which Robert could not possibly understand. But their chaperon was too much disturbed to be aware of any byplay. He even

forgot to be cold and stern to Jacob. He had found awaiting him, on his return from his walk, a letter from Florence which had upset him so much that he felt compelled to go and tell somebody about it, even though it should be Birnbaum. He lowered himself solemnly on to a sofa beside his niece and exploded his bomb.

"Here's a pretty state of things! Florence writes that she's thinking of marrying this fellow Dodd."

"Florence!" cried Antonia.

"Dodd!" cried Jacob.

If Robert wanted to startle them, he succeeded. They both turned perfectly pale with astonishment and dismay, and sat looking at each other while he rambled on:

"I can't think what her father will say. If he's got any sense, he'll forbid it! He'll forbid it! But I suppose he'll blame me. How could I have prevented it? How could I have foreseen it? Who could have thought that Florence, FLORENCE, a sensible woman like Florence, not quite a young girl either, would dream of doing such a thing. A delicate-minded, well-bred girl, to take up with a wretched mountebank, a disagreeable, ill-conditioned young cub, with the manners of . . . of . . . well, he hasn't got any manners. And goodness knows if he ever washes."

"Oh, but he does!" interrupted Antonia, recovering speech. "I'm sure he does, Uncle Robert. I've seen him. . . ."

"Well, he doesn't look as if he does. A shoddy Bohemian! One of these bad-blooded young ruffians who defy decency and call it art! No better than a hooligan! Oh, yes, I dare say he has done some very fine work, but that's no reason why she should want to marry him. Good heavens! Isn't it enough to have had one of them in the family? Couldn't she have been warned? I should have thought the look of him would be sufficient; a sulky, impudent-looking

fellow, who's probably sprung from the gutter, without a single . . . ”

“You are mistaken, Mr. Churchill,” put in Jacob. “I think that his family is very good. His father is Sir Felix Dodd. You have heard of him . . . yes?”

“Dodd! Dodd! Good God!” spluttered Uncle Robert.

Jacob hastily produced all the details in his possession which could cast any light upon Lewis's early career. Uncle Robert continued to call, at intervals, upon Dodd and God.

“But what on earth can they think they are doing?” asked Antonia. “They must be mad. Florence is so clever. And Lewis isn't, a bit. And she's very good, too . . . ”

“But,” broke in her uncle, “but, to my mind, this about his family makes it worse. Much worse! There must have been some very grave scandal before an English family would cut off . . . ”

“I do not believe there was a scandal,” said Jacob, “and I think that he cut them off. I have never heard that it was their wish. He ran away because he did not like his father. He has lived a wandering life, but I think there has been no disgrace. I know he played the cornet once, with a circus . . . but . . . ”

“Completely *déclassé*,” groaned Uncle Robert. “No! I think his possessing a family makes it worse. I remember now, I did hear that old Dodd had a scamp of a son who had run away from school. A tramp! A circus band! You tell me that he had the education and opportunities of a gentleman, and threw them away to play the cornet in a circus band? Then there's nothing to be said for him, as far as I can see. I shall go out and telegraph. I shall wire to Florence that I don't approve at all. I shall entreat her father to come out and stop it.”

Tea hardly pacified him. He swallowed a little and then

bustled off to despatch his telegrams. Jacob and Antonia mournfully discussed the event.

"She can't know what he is really like," said Antonia.

"It is madness," agreed Jacob. "He has cut himself off from her world because he will not endure it. Will he now return to it? Or does he think that she will share his life?"

Antonia conjectured that Florence did not know very much about his life. She remembered a conversation in which his name had been mentioned and said:

"I think she rather admires his character."

"Admires!"

"Yes. She said he was . . . what was it? An ascetic! What does that mean?"

"It means a man who will practise a life of austerity for the cause of some great ideal," he told her.

"O—o—oh! But . . ."

"You would say that this does not describe Lewis?"

"I never knew him go without anything he wanted."

"Nor I. It is true that he does not want very much. Perhaps she admires him for that. A wild savage would want even less than he does, yet she would not marry a wild savage. In some ways Lewis is not so much to be admired as a savage."

The wedding came off next morning at an early hour. Uncle Robert departed immediately afterwards, for he was in a hurry to catch a train back to Innsbruck and put an end to all this nonsense of Florence and that fellow Dodd. The wedded pair saw him go without much regret for, unceasingly distracted by the indiscretions of his nieces, he had assumed a most aggrieved air. Throughout the ceremony he stood over Jacob like a gaoler, as though he suspected him of refusing, at the last moment, to make an honest woman of Antonia. When it was over he kissed the bride with a sort of grudging melancholy and wished her happy in tones which

prophesied inevitable calamity. He shook hands with the groom, averting his eyes, and popped into his taxi.

Antonia and Jacob returned at their leisure to the opulent hotel where they intended to begin their honeymoon. After the constraint of the past weeks they felt very much like children on a holiday.

"Do you know," said Jacob, as he hooked up his wife's dress that evening, "I think that I am a little grateful to your uncle. It is so interesting that I have not seen any of these lovely dresses before. No! Do not wriggle! That is quite correct, how I have done it. I shall not get you a maid just yet! We shall do very well without one, for a little, *nicht wahr?*"

"I'd be frightened of a maid," she said quickly.

But he said, with some firmness, that she must have one, to keep her clothes in order. She wore black lace, which was a little old for her; in her desire to look like Florence she did not consider that sixteen should not dress like twenty-eight. But the gown gave her height and dignity, and Jacob felt very proud indeed as he followed her into the restaurant, and saw how men at other tables turned to gape enviously at her slender, delicate beauty.

It was, perhaps, from her mother that she inherited her capacity for looking aristocratic. He had never felt more strongly this sense of having married his superior. She sat opposite him, gravely and slowly eating her dinner and looking so stately that he did not dare to press her foot under the table. Yet this was the barefooted gypsy who had conquered his heart in Genoa; the swaggering, brazen little creature whose ragged clothes had so greatly discomposed him in the Munich streets. She was, in these days, rather silent, and often he would have liked to know what was in her mind. He could never guess. He sat and watched her now, a little miserable for all his possessive pride,



as she sipped her wine, thoughtfully, and with downcast eyes. The long lashes on her cheek, the soft curve of her neck, her white fingers, drumming on the table, with his ring shining upon one of them, all were like tiny stabs. His love could show him these, but he had no clue to her prisoned thoughts. If he asked her, she would say lightly that she was thinking of nothing at all. Or she would expound to him a long train of amazing childish reflections. Only one thing he knew: she did not think of him as persistently, or as unhappily, as he thought of her.

After dinner they went to the opera, there being nothing else to do. He could have wished that it had not been "Otello," which they had heard in Munich. Echoes of their first disastrous adventure continually haunted him. But Tony seemed to have forgotten all about it, and enjoyed herself with energy. That earlier evening had passed so completely from her mind that he could not help wondering if she had been too drunk to remember anything. He hoped so; it was better that she should forget. He must remember, bearing the burden of it for both of them, how he had sat beside her, savagely counting the slow minutes, while on the stage an appalling drama of conquering hate swung on to its dire climax. He became so gloomy that she asked him, at last, if he was worried about anything. He assured her, instantly, that he was the happiest man in the world.

And he was. At times he was almost bewildered by his own bliss in being there, with Tony, so terribly dear, beside him; really his own for the rest of his life. It was not her fault if the insatiable sorrows of an unequal love tormented him, the hungry demand for more, for a fuller return, for a feeling which it was not in her nature to give. As she leaned forward, absorbed in the passions staged beneath her, he felt suddenly that their box contained just himself and a

wraith, a ghost; as if the real Antonia, whom he loved, was an imagined woman living only in his sad fancy.

She saw that he was troubled. She took his hand and held it, glancing at him sometimes with an exquisite, gentle compassion which mitigated that solitude of spirit which she could not share. In the last *entr'acte* she said:

"What will Tessa and Lewis do, if he marries Florence?"

"Tessa?"

"Yes. She loves him."

"I never knew that."

"Didn't you? Just think."

He thought and decided that she was quite right. In the light of his own trouble he was very sorry for Teresa, robbed thus of her friend by the lady from England. He said so.

"Florence hasn't taken him away," said Tony decidedly. "Nobody could do that."

"But, Tony . . . this must be the end of it, for Lewis and Tessa. It will part them."

"Never, while they live. But Florence will be rather a complication. Listen!"

The lights went down and the first bars of the "Willow Song," a plaintive murmur of warning, stole out into the dark house. Antonia sank back into a dream. Jacob, still inattentive to the fate of Desdemona, reflected throughout the last act upon the encounter of this strange three . . . Lewis . . . Tessa . . . and Florence, their wild history still before them, their tragedy still unplayed. It seemed to him possible that they might never meet. So many perils threatened this crazy marriage and any one of them might wreck it.

He sighed deeply, being in the mood to be sorry for everybody. His sigh was echoed by Tony, since the tragic loading was over. The Moor, dying, had in his arms the fair woman he had destroyed—was taking his last sad kisses. The cur-

tain, slow and silent like an approaching fate, slid down over the love, the mad despair, and the whispered cry: "*Un bacio . . . e un altro bacio!*" Violins swung through their final poignant arpeggios, and the lights went up. Jacob said:

"I give it a year."

Antonia, pale, rapturous, and blinking, had to be reminded; she was still contemplating a mock death bed.

"Florence and Lewis?" she said. "Do you think as long as that?"

The night was fine and they walked home. She was still dreamy and excited, and at every crossing she shook his nerves by a total disregard of the traffic. The Sangers were like that, he remembered; they always did their best to get themselves run over after a concert. Himself, he never suffered in that way, even though, at the performance, he might have shed tears of delight.

When they got to their hotel she went straight up to bed, but he paused to get a drink. There was, in the vestibule, a flower stall and he bought a handful of roses, stiffly wired into a bouquet, before proceeding to the oppressive gorgeousness of their bridal suite. The lift was lined with looking glass, so that as he shot upwards he got an endlessly reduplicated vision of himself, stout and nervous, a light cloak flung over his shoulder and white flowers in his hand: an infinitely long row of gentlemen carrying offerings to an unforgiving past.



BOOK III  
THE SILVER STY



## CHAPTER XIII

CHARLES annoyed Robert by talking as though the worst part of the business was the bond which Florence had forcibly established between himself and Fulsome Felix.

"Now I shall never be able to get rid of that fellow and his confounded cordiality," he complained. "My son-in-law, by your account, is an unprepossessing rascal. But Florence, not I, will have to suffer for that. As is perfectly proper. I could have endured him very well if he had been the son of another father. As it is, my daughter's marriage will be the cause, I can foresee, of great personal inconvenience to me."

Which Robert thought very flippant. Privately he regarded himself as the chief victim in the affair, for Florence and Lewis, having got themselves married with all possible speed, stayed behind in the Tyrol and left to him the appalling task of escorting the three children back to England.

The whole family had urged Charles to go out in person and forbid the banns. But he, knowing his daughter, refused to give himself so much useless trouble. He sent a few remonstrative telegrams, so wise and so witty that she quite disliked having to tear them up. And, for a long time, he unobtrusively held himself in readiness to rush off and fetch her home at an hour's notice, should she summon him. But no message came. During the first month of her married life she wrote every week to say how happy she was; then, for a time, her letters came almost daily and he interviewed the idea of going to her without waiting for any direct appeal. But in the autumn she seemed to settle down. She wrote

less often and more tranquilly. Lewis, it seemed, was at work again on that Concerto which Sanger's death had interrupted. They had migrated to a little fishing village on the Mediterranean where he could be quite quiet and finish his work in peace. Later, they were to return to England, move into the house which Florence had bought, and launch themselves upon musical society in London.

This house now filled up all her letters to her father. It was at Strand-on-the-Green, and had belonged to one of her many school friends. She had always thought it the most delightful house in the world, and, hearing that it was for sale, she wired to Charles to secure it for her. He bought it about three weeks after her marriage. She was quite sure that it would exactly accommodate herself and Lewis. It was easily accessible, and yet sufficiently out of urban distractions. When their position was quite assured they might live right out in the country, and people should come and stay with them, but at present it was advisable to be near the scene of action. It was a very old house, with a romantic history dating back to Charles II, and a walled garden with a mulberry tree. In this garden a large studio had been built, connected with the house by a covered passage; this was to be the music room, where Lewis was to exist, beautifully undisturbed. Also there was a long, lovely chamber on the first floor, looking out over the river, which was to be the drawing room.

Florence knew every hole and cranny of the building and had already furnished it completely in her mind's eye. For this occupation she had plenty of leisure, for Lewis left her alone a great deal. He was working with as much ease and regularity as he had ever achieved in his life. Marriage seemed to have restored his scattered wits. He had recovered completely from the shock of Sanger's death, was able to sleep soundly at night, and could think of nothing



but his Concerto. Florence was delighted. This work was as important in her eyes as it could be in his, nor did she feel herself neglected, for he was perfectly affectionate when his mind came, as it were, to the surface. She liked solitude and the company of her own thoughts; at this time she almost craved for it, feeling a need to consolidate and preserve that separate and individual outlook on life which even a wife should have, and which often grew shadowy in their unreal, happy hours together. She wanted to get rid of a new uncertainty, a sensation of never knowing her own mind about anything.

Sometimes he would leave his work and they would wander over the terraced hills at the back of the little town; he idly enjoying himself—she attempting continually to build up a solid foundation of understanding between them. She could have wished that he would be a little more interested in the house. She described to him the charms of the district, the delightful cottages tucked away under Kew Bridge, the towing path, and the barges and the swans and Zoffany House. But he persisted in saying, a little absently, that he didn't mind where he lived. They might have been doomed to Queen's Gate.

"Do you really not care what sort of place you live in?" she asked him once.

"I like this place," he replied, "as well as any."

They were sitting on the stone parapet of a vineyard, high up on the hills, a low wall covered with mosses and small flowers. She had taken off her hat and flung it some yards away on the grass. The southern breezes, warm and aromatic, ruffled the soft hair on her forehead, but she looked, as always, very neat and trim. Lewis was perched on the wall just behind her, his feet dangling over the edge. He was busy throwing little pebbles to see how far they would bounce down hill. Beneath them were the huddled yellow

walls and roofs of the town and a few fishing boats drifted over the dazzling bay waters. All was as still and brilliant as a mirage.

"Oh, yes," she said. "This is the South. I know. But it's poppy and mandragora, you know."

"It's what?"

"It makes one lazy. The long sunny days here induce a feeling of leisure which we northern people can't have. I'm sure our efficiency and all that sort of thing is due to the shortness of our daylight. We know our days are limited. The night is such a deplorable waste of time, don't you think?"

"Not always," observed Lewis, hurling a pebble which broke the record.

"But it is," said Florence earnestly. "Think how much of our valuable lives we waste in sleeping!"

Lewis rejoined with a comment which made her blush, just a little. He came round and sat on the wall in front of her, to see her doing it. He liked to say things which put her out of countenance, and did so infrequently enough that she was always taken by surprise.

The contradictions of her temperament were a perpetual source of amusement to him. She still had sudden alarmed withdrawals which delighted him and provoked him to experiment. She was so responsive and yet so shy, combined so much candour with such reticence, that he seemed to pursue long after he had captured her.

She picked a sprig of thyme off the wall, rubbed it between her fingers, and sniffed at it as she reverted to the house.

"Moving in will be simple," she told him, "for I know exactly what I want, down to the last window curtain."

"Can you always get what you want?" he asked in some amazement.

"Oh, yes! It's simply a matter of being firm. In the

drawing room I want the brightest colour to be those lustre jugs I told you about. The permanent decorations ought to be subdued, because the light. . . . Lewis! Stop throwing stones! I don't believe you've listened to a single word I've been saying!"

"Yes, I have. You were talking about jugs. I'm listening. I'm listening to you and a dozen other things as well."

"There aren't a dozen other things. There's on'y . . . the chapel bell, and some men shouting in the boats down on the quay . . . and a dog barking, and some ducks in the garden below."

"Not bad! You've missed about fifty larks in the sky, and the grasshoppers all round us, and a car changing gear on the hill, and the oars in the rowlocks of that boat putting out, and the children playing, and the goat bells away on the hill behind us, and I think I can hear a smithy."

"What a babel it sounds! I'd have said it was a quiet evening."

"So it is. It's so quiet that you can hear every sound in it. Generally there's too much noise for that. But come along, my girl! Put on your hat! The sun is setting and one of these short nights we have here is about to begin."

"Oh, dear! I don't want to go down. This place smells of myrtle and our inn smells of garlic."

He went and picked up her hat and clapped it on her head. They began to pick their way down the hill, arm in arm.

"I used to wonder," she said suddenly, "what Albert Sanger and my aunt used to talk about, that time they ran away to Venice. Do you think they counted up the number of sounds they could hear?"

"Sanger? Oh, I shouldn't think so. He always maintained that women were three quarters deaf."

"He couldn't have thought that of her. She was very musical."

"Oh, musical!" said Lewis vaguely, as if this had nothing to do with the discussion.

His memory cast very little light on the career of Evelyn Sanger, though Florence had questioned him more than once. What he did say was disappointing. Evelyn had not impressed him. He did not think her beautiful or brilliant or fascinating. But he admitted that she was clever at getting Sanger out of scrapes and putting a good face on scandals. She was not as able as Linda, however, in dealing with duns. She had dwindled, it seemed, into a small-souled, careworn creature, overburdened with children and defeated by the petty, material side of life. Perhaps her vision was not quite wide enough; it had failed, anyhow. But then, Sanger was a brute. Even Lewis said so.

"If it had been me," thought the niece indignantly, "I should have left him. I wouldn't have dreamt of putting up with it. It's . . . it's degrading . . . clinging to a man who behaved like that. She could have had no pride."

In the streets of the town it was already getting dusk. They went carefully through smells and refuse, down the steep hill and under massive archways, to their little inn just above the quay. In the dark of their room they found letters from England awaiting them, glimmering whitely on the dressing-table. Lewis took his out on to the balcony where the last gleams of daylight lingered. He had a fat envelope with two letters inside it and he laughed aloud as he scanned the first:

DEAR LEWIS,

Will you please come and take us away from here? It is a disgusting school and we have endured it as long as we are able. Really and truly we've tried to put up with it, because Tessa said one ought to give everything a fair trial, but it doesn't and we can't. It isn't like what you said it would

be. We would never have come if we had known what it would be like. We shall kill ourselves if we are not soon taken away; we cannot exist here, it is insufferable. The Girls are hateful, they say we don't wash and are liars. The governesses are a Queer Lot and not fitted to be teachers I'm sure. They think of nothing but games. Why should we have to play games if we don't like? Would you like it? Work is sensible, we don't mind that. It was your fault that we were persuaded to come, so you will be a murderer if you don't take us away before we end our miserable Lives. When Florence wrote to say we must stay because it's good for us our hearts broke and all the house rang with our frantic lamentations. Could you come and take us out to tea? They'd let you if you said you were married to her. And then we could all go to the Station and take some train that goes a long way off. We have nobody to help us only you, and as the Poet says: On some fond Breast the parting soul relies! Do, *do*, do come, DEAR Lewis. You will not be sorry when you hear our joyful ejaculations.

Your Sincerely friend,  
PAULINA ELOISE SANGER.

PS. Probably we shall hang ourselves.

PS. Tessa says I'm to say she won't. She says that I can if I like, but she won't on any account because it is a Mug's Game. But it's not as bad for her as she doesn't have to play this hellish hockey because she has a valvular lesion. They found it at the medical inspection, so she has to go for walks. I forgot to say we hope your having a nice time and like being married. Tony does. She is coming to England this winter. She sent us a picture postcard that the Girls said was common. Caryl did too. He is playing in a cinema.

When Lewis had finished reading this letter he swung round to call in through the window to Florence that the girls were unhappy at school and must be removed. Then he remembered that Paulina had said something about Florence having written. It was the first he had heard of it! Queer! He looked at the letter again and saw that the envelope contained another from Teresa. He began to read:

Lina threatens to write, so I think I'd better take up my pen too, that I may warn you not to pay too much attention to her. I don't think she will kill herself, she is not nearly brave enough. Reflect upon her character and consider if I am right! You need not worry to come and take us away if it's inconvenient to you, since no fatal consequences will befall.

But I must confess that we don't find ourselves very comfortably situated in this school. We don't mean to stay for another term. But I think we can endure it till Christmas. There are a lot of people here who I think you would laugh to see. I do often. But it's really a waste of time for us to be here. We would learn more in some other place where they didn't play games perhaps.

I can't write very well, because I'm frantic, because a girl called Mary Marlowe is in this room playing *Jardins sous la pluie* FFFFF! This isn't her fault, because no person is allowed to play anything properly in this school. If they do, Miss Somers says: What are you putting in the expression for? You can't put in the expression till I've told you what to put. In the room next door another girl called Naomi Hooper is playing the Sonata Pathétique. She is putting in the expression, and I wish to God that she wouldn't. The noise is filthy and infernal.

They hate us, and we hate them. When we come in, they all stop talking and whisper. We don't ever get away from them. A person has to be alone sometimes, but truly the only place where you can be alone here is the lavatory, which is not very comfortable, and they come rattling at the door if you stay there too long. We go there when we cannot conceal our tears. Our chief business is to be always running as there is some place, on a time table, that we must be in *every minute of the day*, and these places are often far apart, and no allowance is made for transit. I know now why you ran from your school.

With kind regards,

Your Very Dear TESSA.

It had grown so dark before Lewis had finished reading that he could scarcely decipher the last words. When he

had done, he stood for a moment with a perfectly blank mind, staring out to sea. This unstudied letter had brought her so forcibly to his imagination that she might almost have stood beside him. She had breathed a hasty confidence into his ear, a caressing farewell, called herself his very dear Tessa (and she was! God knew how dear!) and then, suddenly, she was quite gone, vanished into the shadows.

He leant over the balcony and looked fixedly into the odd, ill-kept little garden beneath, as though amid its tangled thickets and the blackness of its cypresses he might catch the whisk of her petticoats. But he saw nothing and heard nothing save the sea whispering on the beach. And he became aware that the gathering night was inexpressibly melancholy—empty. He was desolate because of the vast, aching sorrow of the water, pale as mother-of-pearl, smooth as glass, where a few black boats still hovered. On the horizon purple clouds collected slowly, and from the stumpy tower at the end of the quay a yellow path of light came to him across the dim expanses of the sea. It was all sad. In the whole of this cool, limpid evening there was nothing of her and he had been bereft, robbed. Her letter, crushed in his hand, was a dead thing, powerless to charm her back. Florence called, in a clear low voice, from the room behind him.

“Did you speak, Lewis?”

He thought that he must have exclaimed. Perhaps he had called on his friend, a little imploringly, in the darkness.

“No,” he said confusedly. “No.”

And he went back into the room.

His lady wife sat in front of the dressing-table, where two tall wax candles burned on either side of the looking-glass. She was brushing her hair with soft, rhythmical movements and did not at once turn round. All that he could see was a fine dark cascade of hair, touched at the edges to a golden

haze by the candle light. It hid her face and shoulders. Presently she glanced at him and asked in surprise if he had seen a ghost. He said that he had not. But his look of blank discovery did not immediately disappear. The dressing-table was all covered with little boxes and bottles and brushes and her rings, winking in the candle light. She took them off, when she did her hair, all except her wedding ring, which shone, bland and smooth, on her left hand. He looked at it, and at her, as though he saw them for the first time. She was so solid, so inevitably established there, that she seemed to defy the memory of the little wraith on the balcony.

"I've had a letter . . ." he began.

"So have I," said his wife. "From your sister."

"Millicent?" His brow grew dark. "Again?"

"Again! Then you did get it?"

"Get what?"

"Her first letter. She says she wrote in June, when she saw our marriage in the paper. But as she got no answer she fears it never reached you."

"Yes, it reached me. I tore it up."

"Why?"

"I don't want to have anything to do with her."

"I don't think that is very reasonable. Her letter to me is very friendly. She wants us to come and see her when we are in England. Read it."

He took the note, disgustedly, and read it through.

"She's up to no good," he commented. "But I can't quite see what she's after. What does she get by this sudden friendliness?"

"Couldn't it be genuine good nature?"

"No, it couldn't. She never had an ounce of it in her life. But why can't she leave us alone?"

He simply could not understand these advances. He had



married Florence without ever formulating to himself any clear idea as to her social position; at first he had thought of her as Tessa's cousin, and, later, as the object of his own desires, but never as a Churchill and the daughter of the Master of St. Merryn's. In his simplicity he supposed that she was not grand enough to be an asset to anybody. She talked a great deal about her friends, but they all had names unknown to him, and he did not realize that Millicent might have found them impressive.

Florence herself had vague suspicions of the truth, but, in her anxiety to be reconciled with Lewis's family, she preferred to ignore them. Already she had managed to forget that at college she had avoided an intimacy with Millicent Dodd with very considerable difficulty. She said firmly that she should answer the letter, and his expression, on hearing this, goaded her to carry the battle a step further.

"I think you should have told me when first she wrote. One acquires an interest in relatives when one marries."

"Is that so?" he took her up quickly. "You don't tell me when Tessa and Lina write to you."

"My dear Lewis! That's a perfectly different case."

"How is it different?"

"Teresa and Paulina," she said with a flush, "write very silly letters which, for their own sakes, I should be sorry to show to anybody."

"I'll engage they write better letters than Millicent. You can get the truth out of them, at least . . ."

"Not always, I'm afraid. The world in general finds that they . . . shall we say . . . exaggerate a little."

He stated his opinion of the world in general rather forcibly, in terms which she had never heard used before. She asked, in some bewilderment, what he meant. Then she grew angry.

"There is no need to be so violent," she said.

"Why have you sent them to such a . . . such a . . ."

"What!" she cried, enlightened. "Have they written to you? Little monkeys! May I see?"

Smiling, yet a little displeased, she held out a hand for the letters, and, after a brief hesitation, he gave her Paulina's. She laughed, quite kindly, as she read it.

"Poor darlings! It's rather hard, I do admit. But they must learn to put up with it. They must become civilized beings, you know, if they are to live in a civilized world. And this process, though painful, is probably as quick as any."

"Why should they live in a civilized world, as you call it?"

"Don't be unreasonable. You know as well as I do that an uncivilized world is no place for them. Think of Tony!"

He found this unanswerable. Thinking of Tony, he had formerly given them advice which he now regretted. It was true that he had himself encouraged them to go to Cleeve. Florence was demanding to see Teresa's letter in a determined way.

"Oh, well," he mumbled, withholding it, "it says the same thing."

"I'd like to see it, please."

He gave it up. She frowned over it, but gave it back quite safely with the comment:

"Not quite so artless, I'm afraid. Paulina is at least sincere, don't you think?"

"So is Tessa sincere."

"Not altogether. She pretends to be writing to tell you not to come. Why does she write at all then? She knows she's no business to do it. I'm sure that Paulina never thought that she oughtn't. But Teresa has some feeling in the back of her mind that she wants to hide."

"Has she?" asked Lewis, beginning to re-read the letter with interest. "I don't think Tessa could hide anything."

"I think," she suggested, "that I wouldn't answer them if I were you. Or just send them a cheery picture postcard."

"I shall do no such thing," he exclaimed, angrily aware of a hint of coercion in her manner. "I shall write and advise them to run away if they don't like it."

"Don't be absurd! I must ask you not to do anything so silly. I've taken the responsibility for those girls and I'm sure my father would agree with me. They oughtn't to be encouraged to feel sorry for themselves."

"I can't help what you and your father think. I knew Tessa and Lina before you did."

"Still, they can't be so much to you that you would deliberately go against me in this matter? Because, you know, I shall feel it strongly, very strongly indeed, if you insist upon writing to them after what I've said."

Something in the gentle decision of her tones had a dreadful effect on his temper. They were both very angry, for behind the dispute lay deeper issues than they cared to admit. Teresa aroused in him a devotion, and in her a dislike, which neither fully realized. At last, with a furious exclamation, he seized his hat and flung out of the room, slamming the door behind him. It was their first quarrel.

For a few minutes she was quite dazed. Then she smiled and murmured to herself:

"Dear me! What a hullabaloo!"

And soon afterwards she said firmly:

"He'll have got over it when he comes in."

She finished brushing her hair and sat still, thinking. It was really time that she took stock of herself and her position. This explosion was significant of a sort of uncertainty, a hesitation of mind, which had grown on her in the past weeks. She must think; she must think about herself and Lewis. Only that was difficult when he had so completely mastered her imagination. Always he was in her mind, but not

rationality; the idea of him had grown so large that it blotted out everything else. Before they married she remembered that she used to think about him a great deal. She had seen him clearly though mistakenly. Since then he had changed into quite another person and she saw him clearly no more. Their closer intimacy had brought about a regrettable want of focus. Her old values were lost, her sense of proportion submerged by the cataclysmic new things that had happened to her, and she would have liked ideas of some sort to follow upon this process. But she had none. It was as if he had picked her up and carried her off to some strange place where there were no standards left by which to judge him. Nor did she rebel against this when they were together; in his arms she could see her lost world crumble away and remain serene. But, in her hours alone, she would search, rather frightened, for a new self. Once she could say very confidently why she loved him. Now she was hardly sure of anything about him, or about herself, save that he had possessed her. This isolated fact was so absorbing that she could not see round it.

As she slowly dressed for supper she told herself that, for both their sakes, she must recover some measure of poise and detachment. She must get rid of this pliant languor which had in some ways made their relations so easy, but which was a bad foundation for rational partnership. A determination seized her to get back to England as soon as possible. In England she would be reinforced by her own background.

She waited for him and, as he did not come, she went down and ate her supper alone. Then she came up and sat for a long time on the balcony listening to the sea. Quite late, when she was thinking of going to bed, she heard him come in, and called to him. He came out at once and stood beside her, leaning on the edge of the balcony. In the pale

starlight he looked strange, wild, almost exhausted, but she did not think that he was still angry. He put a hand on her shoulder and asked in a low voice:

"Well? What have you been doing?"

"Listening to the sea," she said.

He listened, too, for a few seconds. Then he shivered and exclaimed almost in a whisper:

"It's cold. Come in!"

"I'm not cold. Have you caught a chill?"

"I hate this balcony!"

Still grasping her shoulder he leaned forward and looked down into the garden. An owl hooted in the thickets and he jerked back, his nervous clever fingers tightening their clutch. For all those hours he had been thinking of Tessa, away in England, shut up, beating her untamed little spirit against prison bars. Soon he was going to England himself, near to her. A conviction that he had better not came upon him so strongly that he exclaimed aloud:

"Don't let's go!"

"Go where? What do you mean?"

"England. Let's stay here. We'd better not go."

"My dearest boy! I've bought the house!"

"Couldn't you get rid of it?"

"Lewis! You're moonstruck! It's quite impossible!"

"Oh, very well!" he yielded with an odd defensive gesture.

"It's your doing. Come in! Come to bed."

She did not reopen the question of the children's letters since that might sound like nagging. So she left it, almost sure that he would not write. And in this confidence she was justified. Perhaps he forgot, or perhaps he did not know what to say; but Teresa and Paulina awaited his answer in vain, shedding many salt tears, night and day, in their bitter exile at Cleeve.

## CHAPTER XIV

THE music room was the most important of all the rooms in the new house. Here Florence put a beautiful piano and a good writing-desk and comfortable chairs and a waste-paper basket which Lewis never used. Then she turned him loose into it, with an assurance that it should be entirely his own, and that nobody should ever clean it. For this he was not properly grateful, having forgotten the ways of housemaids.

"Clean it?" he said. "I should hope not! Roberto never cleans anything."

Good little Roberto had attached himself to Florence and Lewis when Sanger's circus was broken up. During the honeymoon he had gone on a holiday to see his relations, and then he came to England to do the housework at Strand-on-the-Green. He was, so Florence said, more useful than three maids put together and much pleasanter to deal with. He did all the work, with the help of a charwoman who came in the mornings.

"He's exactly the kind of servant I've always wanted," said Florence. "Really feudal. He gives the right tone to the house."

"The right tone?" said Lewis in a puzzled voice. "Scaramello? I don't quite see what you mean, but he looks very fine now you've cleaned him up."

"He's the sort of servant we ought to have. He goes so well with the sort of effect I want to produce."

"Why should you want to produce any sort of effect?"

"One does produce a definite impression on people, whether or not one makes any conscious efforts about it, so one might as well take pains, and think a little. I want this house to look like us . . . pleasantly Bohemian . . . a sort of civilized Sanger's circus, don't you know, with all its charm and not quite so much . . . disorder."

Lewis looked very doubtful.

"I don't see how you're going to do it, Mrs. Dodd, and anyhow it's a queer ambition for a respectable married woman."

"You think of nothing but respectability these days."

"I daresay," he said lightly, "I'm a reformed rake."

And he fled to his music room, leaving her to do what she liked with the rest of the house. It seemed to him that she was oddly changed since their return to England. It had begun on their journey home; as they sped northwards she had become more assured and domineering with every mile. She grew brisker and more decisive; she spoke more quickly. Still, she was very good to him. She took charge of everything, protected and shielded him in all disturbances, and provided this charming room where he could retreat from the racket which went on in the rest of the house. Here he worked through the shortening autumn days, emerging at intervals for food, to find his wife, competent and commanding, generally at the top of a stepladder. They went sometimes for little walks along the towing path or to Kew Gardens, and he admitted that Strand-on-the-Green was really a delightful spot. But of his new quarters, as a whole, he took so little notice that he sometimes lost his way about the house. He was quite unable to describe it to the Birnbaums, who had taken, for the winter, a large furnished house in Lexham Gardens. He went to see them as soon as they arrived and sat with them for a long time, smoking Jacob's cigars and exchanging gossip of the Sanger world in which

this young pair had been cutting a great figure. Antonia was most anxious to know how he did with Florence.

"Very well," he told her. "She's a model wife."

"Have you quarrelled yet about anything?"

"Oh, no. I'm so firm, you see."

They laughed at this and asked what he was firm about.

"Well, there's the little question of my family. She's strangely anxious that we shall all be brought together, and since we came home she's struck up a sort of friendship with my sister. Ever met my sister, Ike?"

"I have not had that pleasure, I'm afraid."

"Well, that's natural, for she's your social superior; a knight's daughter and married to a baronet's heir. But you needn't regret it, for she's as ugly as sin. Toothy, you know, and pop-eyed. And a tongue like a horse radish, as Florence will discover before she's much older. Anyhow, over that I've been firm. I won't have her in the house. If I receive her, I don't know what lengths they might go. It might be my father next!"

"Your father! Does he clamour to be received?"

"Well, not exactly," confessed Lewis. "But Florence has seen him, and she tells me that I'm in danger of his free forgiveness if only I'll apologize for my language last time we met. So you see the ice is thin!"

"What occurred when you last met?" asked Jacob, who had always been curious to know. "Did he oppose your musical career?"

"Oppose it!" cried Lewis. "I wish he had! No, it was his encouragement that drove me into being a prodigal."

"I see. He knew too much about it? That happens sometimes."

"He knows too much about everything. He had to, I suppose, being a school inspector. But I didn't object as long as he left my department alone. I could put up with his



bloody little text books and what his dear friend, the archbishop, said to him coming out of the club, as long as he didn't interfere with me. When he did, I had to go away."

"He has written your pieces for you?" asked Jacob with a grin.

"I declare I wouldn't put it past him! But he didn't get as far as that. I made my protest when he had the amazing impudence to purloin a thing of mine and show it to Simon, for his opinion, apparently! Simon!"

"Simon! You mean Lucius Simon?"

"But certainly. There's only one of him, I should hope."

"One is too many," said Jacob gloomily.

Thus they dismissed a man who was still the most renowned of British composers. In their circles, however, Lucius Simon was hardly considered worth a malediction. He was, perhaps, the wrong age.

"Simon," Lewis explained, "was one of my father's friends. Bound to be! An obscene, loathsome, complacent, self-advertising maggot if ever there was one! Just the sort of fellow my father would take to. Plenty of them at our house; and all so hearty and gentlemanly, don't you know, all busy building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land, and doing well out of it. No, don't laugh, Tony! You think that's Ike's job? I tell you, you've no idea what these people are like. I hadn't noticed the thing was gone from my room (it wasn't much of a thing, you know, only boy's work) till the old man sent for me one evening, and there, in the library, I found Simon puffing at his cigar and digesting his dinner. I nearly vomited at the sight of him. And then I saw my manuscript in his pudgy paws, and my father said: 'I've sent your little Sonata to Mr. Simon, Lewis (he was mister then), to see if he could make anything of it for you. You'll find his suggestions very helpful.' Simon! And they handed it back to me with his filthy scrawls all over it, as

if they were giving me a thousand pounds! And Simon said I had some powers and a gift for melody. Simon!"

"So you have," said Jacob. "But you are afraid of it. Before I have always wondered why that is. Now I know that it is Simon. You were foolish, Lewis. He could have done so much for you. I suppose you insulted him?"

"Of course he had influence. My father knows nobody who hasn't. No. I kept my temper remarkably well. I merely threw the thing into the fire and walked out of the room."

"Just quite quietly, like that," explained Tony, and Lewis had to laugh, remembering how he had stalked off, with all the fiery, outraged vanity of art and youth combined, and slammed the door upon two flabbergasted gentlemen.

"Next day," he said, "I spoke my mind. I'd been wanting to do that for seven years. Then I ran away."

"And that is the story of your life," murmured Jacob. "I have often wondered. Your wife . . . does she know?"

Lewis reflected and said that he did not think so.

"If she knew, she would tell you, as I do, to be wise and forget it. Now he is willing to forgive you. Why is that?"

"Oh, because I've married so well. I never realized, you know, that he'd be so pleased. If I'd known . . . oh, well, I'd have done just the same, I suppose. But it riles me to think how he's probably going round telling everybody that he always knew I would sow my wild oats and settle down. But he sha'n't set foot in my house, unless it's over my corpse."

"I thought it was Florence's house," said Tony, puzzled.

"Oh, well, it is really. But I'm master in it."

"What is it like? Is it as nice as this?"

"Oh, well . . ." he looked round at the disordered magnificence of the room where they sat: "No, it's not as grand as this."

"Can I come and see it? Shall I come to-morrow?"

"No, don't come to-morrow. Come some time when she's at home. She's gone away to Cambridge, to her father."

"Gone back to her father! But not for always?"

"Oh, no! Only for a week-end. We've not parted."

Antonia, who still could not believe that Florence and Lewis were really happy together, looked dubious. She said:

"Tell me when she comes back and I'll go and see her. And she must come and see me. Do you like this house? Jacob took it. It belongs to a friend of his; he collected all these Gainsboroughs. But I don't like having a house. It's a bother. You can be just as comfortable in your own suite in an hotel. But we thought we'd better because I'm going to have a baby in the spring. Did you know?"

"That's excellent news. I congratulate you, Tony."

"You'd better congratulate Jacob."

"I congratulate you, Ike."

"Have a cocktail!" said Jacob expansively.

"He says," murmured Antonia, "that a boy with my brains and his money may get anywhere."

"My cherished one! I said your father's brains."

"Yes. But that's not tactful. Myself, I feel I might have a daughter with Sanger's disposition and Jacob's appearance."

"These," said Lewis, "are morbid fears natural to your condition. You must get rid of them. I'm drinking his health!"

Until dusk he lingered with them, enjoying the stuffy comfort of the room, with its rich heavy hangings and soft carpet and chairs like little feather beds. He told them about his new Concerto and offered to send it to them. But they, who preferred listening to reading, made him play some of it to them. Their approval seemed to please him very much.

"Florence thinks it a great advance on the 'Revolutionary Songs'," he told them.

He added, seeing that they were amazed at this quotation of an alien opinion:

"She's very interested in music, you know. Really she seems to have heard a lot."

"*Du lieber Gott!*" exclaimed Jacob, when Lewis had left them. "Tony! What is to become of that poor fellow? When did one hear Sanger quote the opinion of any of his women?"

"My mother was musical," said Antonia thoughtfully.

"Musical!"

Jacob again called upon the God of the Patriarchs to witness the accursedness of ladies who were musical. It was a pity that Florence could not hear him.

"Your father," he said, "made a mistake when he married your mother. He was caught as Lewis is now caught; his appetites were stronger than his common sense. But he broke through all that; he had so much brutality. Lewis will not treat this woman as Sanger treated your mother. He is not brutal."

"Isn't he? He's insanely cruel sometimes."

"Cruel? Yes! That is a different thing. Clever people are cruel. Stupid people are brutal."

"Sanger wasn't stupid."

"He was not clever. His strength was that; it made him so different! And, for a man of genius, little heart, he was wonderfully insensitive."

"And I can't see that Florence has done Lewis any harm. It's lovely, this Concerto he has written."

"It is good, yes!" mused Jacob. "Something has happened to him in this year. 'Breakfast with the Borgias' was the beginning. We thought that was a joke, but it was a sign. Always, before that, he had a . . . how

would you call it? . . . a *gêne* . . . a constraint . . . almost a terror, of his own power to write melody. He could do it, and he would not. It seemed sad to me, for those who could do that have been so few . . . not half a dozen . . . ”

“Sanger stopped him.”

“I know. It was a pity, your father’s influence. While he was your father’s disciple he would never obey his own nature. He was a *révolté* and Sanger’s was the music of revolt. Now he is becoming free of all that.”

“Well! Florence isn’t stopping him.”

“Nothing will stop him. I think that he should have a hearing in this country. Sanger will soon be popular. Then also the early work of Lewis. The Symphony in Three Keys! This year we will have that, and next year the new Concerto.”

“You will see about it?” cried Tony.

“I will think of it. This Concerto is good, but until now I had never thought of his future. He has fought himself.”

“He’s a good conductor. Better than Sanger was.”

“That is so,” agreed Jacob. “I will see him some time and ask him if he would like a concert.”

Antonia looked very pleased, for if Jacob said that anybody should have a concert, they generally had one. And a year ago she was sure that he would never have thought of risking money on Lewis. She planned to tell Florence all about it.

Lewis jogged home, through the wintry twilight, on the top of an omnibus. He was feeling rather lugubrious for he expected his house to be chilly. The boards were too bare and the furniture too hard and sparse; there was none of the fat comfort and untidiness that make for warmth. When Florence was there, of course, it was different. She made a sort of glow in it. But she had fallen out with him and was

gone to sulk at Cambridge. That was the truth, though he had been so light-hearted about it at Lexham Gardens. She had asked Millicent and her husband to dine with them, and he, when told of it, had demanded that the invitation should be cancelled. They had come to terrible grief. Florence said that there were some things which nobody could do; he had replied that there was nothing that he could not do, and that he would write Millicent himself if she did not. Also that his letter, if written, would probably be the ruder of the two. She had commanded and implored him. She had said that it was very humiliating for her, and that she would not submit to it. She had frozen him for three days and then, finding it, as he suspected, difficult to keep up, went off to Cambridge. He had no doubt but that she was fortifying herself by pouring out the whole shocking history to her father.

Meanwhile the innocent wretch had left him alone, with no better chaperon than Roberto, in a neat, cold house which always smelt of furniture polish, cheered by the bleak hope that on Monday a neat, cold wife might return to him. He wished that he could have stayed all night with the Birnbaums. He wanted company and distraction, for he had practically finished his Concerto and there was nothing in his head; a dangerous time, when, formerly, he would have gone to stay with the Sangers.

The omnibus came to Kew Bridge and he got off. He whistled as he hastened down to the river and picked his way along the narrow path, in front of the little quiet houses. The river gurgled against the wooden groynings, and across the water he could hear the pulsating throb of a power house. He stood still for a moment, listening with the absent, instinctive concentration that was his nature. Tall, thin chimneys stood up against the winter sunset. Presently the *Mary Blake* came chugging down stream, with a

string of barges in tow, and he turned to stare after her, kicking little bits of gravel into the water.

"Tide nearly high!" he observed to the frosty air.

On the railway bridge just below his house a District train flashed jewelled windows into the river and he thought, rather wistfully, of all the clerks rushing to their supper and the evening paper in crowded little homes at Richmond or Kew. He felt still more reluctant to eat his own meal alone in an empty house, but he dragged slowly along, humming to himself with a grim chuckle:

*"Se vuol ballare, signor contino!"*

He opened the small iron gate in front of his house, and started backward with a cry as three people rose up from the deep shadow of the portico above. They had been sitting in silence on his doorstep.

"It's Lewis!" breathed a voice, and he was nearly throttled by a small pair of arms, flung round his neck, and half a dozen frantic kisses.

"How . . . who . . . why! Paulina!" he stammered. "Sebastian! How did you get here?"

"We've run away," said Paulina. "We had to. Sebastian ran away from his school, so we thought we'd better, too."

"We found your house all shut up," continued Sebastian more calmly. "So we sat on the doorstep and waited for somebody to come."

Lewis looked up at the third person on the step above him. She hovered, a little uncertainly, in the shadow.

"Tessa!" he said eagerly. "Is that Tessa?"

Then she came down to him and he caught her up and turned her face to the last of the daylight, to make sure that he had got her. He heard her laugh and say:

"Yes, it's me! I've come to lay my bones among you."

"Oh, Tessa! This is splendid! How long it's been!"

Yet she hardly seemed real. She was so pale, like a shadow, and in his arms she seemed to have no weight at all; she had alighted there as some fragile, snowy flower might drift down to the grass of an orchard upon a windless night in May.

"Look up!" he commanded. "Lift your head up, Tess, and kiss me!"

She tilted her face up and they kissed, a clinging embrace that was more like a farewell than a greeting. To her that instant brought a pang, a dim echo of times past; to him, an apprehension of change, a foreshadowing of loss and grief to come. They drew quickly apart and she said:

"Are you going to let us into your house, Lewis?"

He pulled a latchkey from his pocket and, unlocking the door, he lifted her up and brought her into the hall. The others followed and the door shut with a clap which resounded through the empty rooms. He stood still in the darkness for a moment, reflecting, asking himself what sort of parting they had had, six months ago. Strange that he could remember nothing of it! He supposed that it was some time in June, somewhere in the Tyrol, but it seemed that he had let her go without a thought, robbed, surely of his wits, by some foolish preoccupation. Then he remembered that he had been getting married. He switched on the light and saw her again, close beside him, young and round-faced, blinking a little in the sudden brilliance.

Two telegrams lay on the hall table. They had arrived during the afternoon and Roberto had put them carefully into view before going out. Lewis opened them. The first said:

Sanger sisters disappeared this morning last seen 9 A.M. are they with you will not inform police unless hear from you have also wired Cambridge Wragge.



The next, which was from Florence, said:

Wire received here saying Sebastian has run away if he turns up at the Green keep him and wire me.

These telegrams Lewis read out, and Teresa commented: "Sanger sisters sounds like a music hall turn."

"Well," said Lewis, determined to be practical and efficient, "we must wire to Florence, and all these schools, to say that you are safe. Come into the music room."

They were much impressed by the music room, and Sebastian immediately began to play the piano while Lewis concocted the telegrams which he was to send. The girls, sitting on either arm of his chair, made suggestions and alterations. The finished product to Florence ran:

All children here have wired schools don't bother to come back your loving husband.

In the messages to the schools they were anxious to be as abusive as possible, but Lewis, with some remnants of prudence, insisted upon censorship. Eventually they compromised with a brief intimation of Sebastian's whereabouts, in the case of his school, and, to Cleeve, the message:

Sanger sisters safe they are not coming back to your school Dodd.

"Because we can't possibly go back," insisted Paulina. "We bore it in silence. . . ."

"No," said Teresa sadly, "not in silence. . . ."

"I did," said Sebastian. "Nobody has ever heard a word of complaint from me."

"What made you run?" asked Lewis.

"They said I was to be in the school choir!" Sebastian told them, with calm indignation.

And he began to play a Beethoven Sonata, op. III, very solemnly, as if its shocked sevenths gave point to his feeling

of outrage. Soon he was making a considerable noise, and the girls, screaming over the din, gave an account of the elopement. Sebastian had objected to many things at his Preparatory. He did not get enough time to practise, he had an inadequate piano with three notes broken, and an instructress who knew nothing about it. His life there was clearly a waste of time and this business of the choir had been the last straw. He had taken advantage of a half holiday and a paper chase to slip off and get to the station. Here he caught a train which went to a cathedral town not ten miles from Cleeve, where his sisters were; so he thought he might as well pay them a visit before going on his travels. He pawned his coat and cap, bought others, had a meal, and went on to Cleeve, feeling that he had covered his tracks very successfully. Late in the evening he presented himself boldly at Farnborough Lodge, the College boarding house where Teresa and Paulina were incarcerated, and asked to see them. He told the lady who interviewed him a very plausible tale of an uncle who had brought him to Cleeve and who was coming next day in person to take the girls out. She never thought of disbelieving him, for it is not usual to suspect such small creatures of so much villainy. She summoned the girls and left the three together. He, finding them unhappy, persuaded them to run away, too. Then he left them and spent a very uncomfortable night in the garden of an empty house, fearing the questions that might be asked if he took a room anywhere. Next day the girls put all their money in their pockets and hid themselves in a dressing room until the whole of the College was assembled in the great hall for morning prayers. Then they put on their hats and walked out of the building, knowing that their absence would not be discovered until the house assembled for lunch at one o'clock. It would be presumed, in the classes where they should have been, that they were absent through illness.

Sebastian met them at the railway station, whither they got themselves in some trepidation, and they took the next train to London. Having found their way to Strand-on-the-Green, they had spent the rest of the time sitting on the doorstep.

"If we'd known how simple it would be," said Paulina, "we'd have done it long ago. Only we didn't know where to run. Why didn't you answer our letters, Lewis?"

Lewis looked uncomfortable and said he had forgotten.

"Tessa said you wouldn't answer."

"Did you, Tessa? Why?"

"Because you have a forgetful nature."

"No, I haven't."

"Yes, you have."

"I think I heard Roberto come in. Listen!"

"Roberto!" they cried. "Is he here?"

And they rushed out to embrace Roberto. In the kitchen there was little trace of Florence. All was a lovely confusion. Roberto could not make a pudding without using every bowl in the house, and never washed a dish until all were dirty. A grand washing up took place every two or three days, and one was evidently almost due, for dirty crockery was piled high on the chairs and tables and even on the floor. Tomatoes, spilling out of a paper bag, splashed the room with colour, onions hung in strings from the ceiling, and the whole place smelt gloriously of garlic.

"Oh!" cried Teresa, with her arms round Roberto's neck, "this is like getting home!"

Lewis pitched a ham off a chair by the fire and sat down. He pulled Paulina on to his knee and began to fill his pipe.

"We'll have our supper in here," he said. "It's warmer."

"It certainly is the place for us," said Teresa.

## CHAPTER XV

TWO letters had come for Florence by the early post next morning. Paulina picked them up from the mat under the letter-box in the hall and brought them to Lewis, who was eating his breakfast in the kitchen.

"They've both got the Cleeve postmark," she said, "and one is from Miss Wragge. I expect she will explain how she came to mislay us. Do open it and see what she says."

"That I can't do," said Lewis. "It belongs to Florence. She wouldn't like it."

"Couldn't you steam it open?" she suggested. "Then you could shut it up again and she won't know. We do so want to hear what's in it; and she won't tell us perhaps."

"These things," said Lewis grandly, "are not done."

"He talks like a book, so he does," commented Teresa.

"And he's quite right," said Sebastian. "She wouldn't do it to his letters."

"I can't think who this is from," said Paulina, peering at the other envelope. "It's typewritten, I think."

Teresa turned quite pale and got up to look at it, too. She suggested that it might be from Miss Butterfield.

"Oh, Tessa! Do you think so?"

Paulina also looked frightened and Lewis asked who Miss Butterfield might be. They told him solemnly that she was the head mistress.

"Then what is Miss Wragge?"

"Only the house mistress. There are twelve of them, you know; one to each house, and one for the day girls. But Miss

Butterfield is the head of the whole college. She lives in a house by herself. They must have told her about us."

"Well, naturally, my good girls! Two pupils couldn't very well disappear without her hearing something of it. Marmalade, Sebastian? What was this lady like, that you blanch at her very name? Did she birch you?"

"No—o! Oh, no!"

"Did any one birch you?"

They shook their heads.

"What did they do to you when you were naughty?"

They seemed at a loss to explain, but they intimated that it had been something awful. It was not so much what was done as what was said.

"I know what it was," put in Sebastian wisely. "They said, 'Naughty girl Sanger! Don't do it again!' And you cried for the rest of the day. That's the way they do at girls' schools."

Teresa and Paulina looked very indignant, but they had to admit that it was something a little like that. Sebastian exchanged a glance with Lewis, a grin of amused contempt at women and their ways. Lewis said:

"But go on about Miss Butterfield. Was she old?"

"Not particularly," said Teresa. "She was called Miss Helen Butterfield, M. A. And she used to read prayers in the morning in a black cloak, with a queer blue thing round her neck. And she had a most beautiful voice; quite different from Miss Wragge, who used to read prayers at the house in the evening and sort of barked them. And she saw people . . . bishops and parents and people . . . and she saw the girls if anybody had died, or if they'd done anything perfectly dreadful. And she used to give addresses to us on Fortitude and Friendship and things like that. She was very nice looking, and had lovely clothes. She very nearly knew our names." This was said in a tone of modest

pride. "We once had a lecture on music from a funny old granpa . . . I forget who he was . . . but I met her showing him over the College next day. And she put her hand on my shoulder and stopped me and said: 'This is Esther Sanger, one of Albert Sanger's daughters. I think I told you that we have two of them here in the College.' And he said: 'How are you, my dear? How are you?' I could see he knew Sanger and was trying to figure out who my mother probably was. I was so startled at Miss Butterfield speaking to me that I couldn't say anything; so I just made a curtsey! . . . And she laughed and said: 'You can see that Esther has been to school in Germany. Run along, my child! We mustn't keep you.' I'd forgotten that in England it isn't manners to curtsey when an old gentleman takes notice of you."

Lewis gaped at this recital and said at last:

"Do you know, I think it was high time you came away. I don't quite like the sound of Miss Helen Butterfield."

"Oh, but she was wonderful!" insisted Teresa. "Really she was. Everybody thought so. I'm sure, whatever happened to her, she would always know exactly how to behave."

"Tessa didn't hate it all nearly as much as I did," Paulina explained.

"Didn't you, Tessa?" asked Lewis jealously. "Why not?"

"Oh . . . it was interesting in a way. It was new."

"Still, you ran away. You came here."

"Yes, because the others did. I barred being left there by myself. I didn't like it well enough for that. Look, Lewis! We haven't seen your house yet. You've got some more rooms, I suppose, besides what we've seen?"

"Oh, yes," said Lewis. "I'll show you the whole concern."

He took them first to the dining room, which was washed white, with an oak cottage dresser and blue plates. There was a gate-legged table, polished almost black, with a lustre dish

on it full of golden oranges. The chimney piece was bare save for a Russian ornament of brilliant enamels which blazed through the sombre-tinted room. Lewis mentioned that Florence wished her house to look like the Karindehütte; an idea which puzzled the children very much. They thought this a poor, bare sort of room, not worthy of their lady cousin. Paulina asked hopefully if the pewter flagons on the side board were silver.

"Imitation," Lewis told her sadly.

"Oh, well," she consoled him. "They look almost real. You might never know."

They came into the hall, where drawings by Florence's friend, Mr. Argony, hung on the yellow walls. Lewis was humming a little tune which somebody, his mother most likely, had taught him before he was out of petticoats. It had just come into his head:

There was a lady loved a swine,  
(Honey! says she.)

"Come upstairs, girls! Our best things are in the parlour.

. . .

"Pig hog," she said, "wilt thou be mine?"  
(Hunks! said he.)

They went up to the drawing room, which was a worse shock than ever. Teresa made an effort and said:

"Well, I think it's nice. You wouldn't expect Florence to have a lot of heavy sofas and things, would you?"

"But still, she's married," objected Paulina. "Married ladies always have sofas. Has Tony got one, Lewis?"

"'Hunks! said he.' Tony? Oh, she has half a dozen."

"What did I say? Ike knows. I don't call that a sofa."

She pointed scornfully to a divan in the window, piled high with beautiful cushions.

"But it's pretty, Lina," insisted Teresa.

"A drawing room," said Sebastian, "doesn't want to be pretty. It ought to be rich and grand."

The young Sangers had but a small experience of drawing rooms. But their general notion of respectability implied a good deal of upholstered mahogany, ormolu, and many small tables with mats and albums. They approved, however, of their cousin's bedroom, to which they were next conducted. It was a fine orderly place, full of her plain, beautiful personal belongings. It was like no lady's room that they could ever have imagined. No powder was ever spilt on the looking-glass, no petticoats hung on the door, no stays were flung over chair backs. The chests and wardrobes smelt faintly of lavender. Pauline looked at the twin beds, side by side, with blue linen covers worked all over in patterns of flowers and leaves in bright wools. She asked in some awe:

"Does she let you sleep in here?"

Lewis nodded. He still found it a little surprising himself, and woke up of a morning feeling that he must have got there by mistake. A burst of music took him, and he broke into the second stanza of his nursery rhyme:

"I'll build for thee a silver sty"  
(Honey! says she.)

"Where do you keep your clothes?" asked Teresa, peeping into a wardrobe.

"Oh, they aren't here. They're in my dressing room."

"Oh! Do you have a special room to dress in? Has Ike?"

"I don't know. I expect so. His house is bigger."

"I call that unsociable," said Paulina. "When you're washing and dressing, that's just the time you want somebody



to talk to. Is she cross when she wakes up in the morning, Lewis?"

Lewis considered, staring at her bed. He could not remember, somehow, what she was really like. He was never very good at imagining people when they were not there, and just now his mind was confused between two Florences, and the astounding reflection that he was married to both. He had begun to show the house in a spirit of marked rebellion against the domineering stranger who owned it; but the comments and conversation of the children, their very different conception of their cousin, brought him back to an earlier idea of her. He remembered her suddenly as the beautiful, kindly, rather defenceless creature that she had been when last they were all together. There was certainly a pathetic quality about her then, which had affected him very powerfully. But since they came to England it had all melted away like snow in the sunshine.

All the morning he was musical and inclined to exclaim "Hunks!" at intervals. Also he learned, in the course of the day, many details of the girls' life at school which amazed and perplexed him. They had, it seemed, gone there with every intention to be good, prepared for inhumanly strict teachers and a great deal of hard work. They were really anxious to be educated and might have done well if the place had not been utterly beyond the scope of their imagination.

Cleeve College was very large and very modern. It had been built up, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, by a famous pioneer in women's education, a hard-bitten lady who apparently believed that a uniform and most desirable type can be produced by keeping eight hundred girls perpetually upon the run. The young creatures, under her rule, were kept most wonderfully busy, and in their subsequent careers they did her credit. Her traditions hung heavy upon Cleeve.

long after her departure. Miss Helen Butterfield, her successor, modified the syllabus and shortened the hours of work, but the girls still ran.

The staff were not at all strict; for the most part they were lively young women, fresh from the University, with a strong faith in hockey and the prefectorial system. The earnestness which the Sangers brought to their school work won them little favour in that quarter, as long as their manners remained so casual and their laziness upon the playing-field so unconcealed. But, as was natural, their failings brought them into collision with the other girls rather than with authority. They would have suffered in any school; but at Cleeve, which was admittedly democratic, their personal habits and their ready mendacity made them the butt of every amateur reformer. The business of baiting them had a moral sanction behind it. They were persecuted for their own good and the honour of their school until they scarcely knew if they could call their souls their own. They could discover no smallest loophole of respite or escape; in class, at games, at bed and board the tyrannical, many-eyed mob were always with them.

Paulina, describing it, was impetuous and violent. Teresa was sardonic, and as often inclined to laugh at herself as at the school. She perceived a certain humour in some of the situations that had arisen, and she persisted in saying that she would have stayed there a little longer if Sebastian had not turned up. Lewis did not like this. He wanted her to say that she had run because she could not help it. He was not at all satisfied with her this morning. Undeniably they had succeeded in changing her at that horrible place. In six months she had grown out of all knowledge; she was sturdier and rather clumsy sometimes; there was a new, thoughtful hardening about her eyes and mouth. Perhaps it was her neat, well-made school clothes that made her look so odd. He had never seen her respectably dressed before. And what

was this horrid fair braid that slapped her back whenever she moved her head? He had to pull the ribbon off and burn it on the kitchen fire. But even when her hair hung loose on her shoulders it looked sleek and heavy, not like the wind-blown locks he used to twist and play with.

They were at tea, toasting muffins in the music room, when Florence returned, cold, tired, anxious, and very much put out. She had received their telegram that morning and had hastened back immediately. Her first impression, as the party round the fire rose to greet her, was that she was an intruder. The children flung themselves upon her with every appearance of joy, but, for the fraction of a second, she knew that their faces had fallen. She tried to be stern and displeased, and said coldly as she got away from them:

"Well, children! What is the meaning of this?"

Lewis was waiting rather shyly until they had done with her, and she, conscious of their inquisitive eyes, went and kissed him on the cheek, exclaiming: "Well, Lewis!" in almost exactly the same tone. But, as if bent upon disconcerting her, he responded with a cordial hug which dissipated all her airs of distant dignity. She exclaimed, flustered and at random:

"Oh, I am so tired . . . ."

They were pulling up a chair to the fire for her; and Teresa was taking off her furs, and Paulina was bringing her a cup of tea, and Sebastian was toasting a muffin for her. Lewis, with quick, deft fingers, was pulling the long pins out of her hat. Then, somehow, he had banished the noisy trio from the room and she was alone with him in the dusk and the quiet firelight. She leant back in her chair, quite exhausted.

"I sent them to the kitchen," he said. "You're tired. You don't want to be worried with them. Have some tea!"

When she was fed and rested he brought her the two letters from Cleeve, which were full of explanations and proposed

plans of actions. He told her that he had wired to both schools. "That was sensible of you, dear boy!"

She gave him an approving look, and he came and sat on the arm of her chair, saying affectionately:

"You needn't have hurried back like this, you know."

"Oh, I had to. They must go back on Monday."

"Go back! Florence! Are you going to make them go back?"

"Of course I am."

"Is it worth while? It's almost the Christmas holidays."

"They mustn't be allowed to think this sort of thing pays."

"I never thought you'd make them go back," he said slowly. "In fact, we said in the telegrams that they wouldn't come back."

"You said . . . What on earth made you say that?"

She sat up indignantly.

"But you won't make them stay another term, surely?"

"I shall indeed."

"They'll only do it again."

"That's nonsense. They'll learn the folly of such escapades. If we give in this time. . . ."

"They were miserable. . . ."

"It was their own fault."

"It was not. This Cleeve! A filthy place by all accounts. They were right not to stand it."

"My dear Lewis! It's the best school in England. I was educated there myself. I know all about it."

He had nothing to say to this. So he pleaded:

"At least don't make Tessa go back. It's different for Lina."

"Lina has been loudest in her complaints."

"I know. But it's done most harm to Tessa. She was very nearly perfect before she went there. . . ."

"*Teresa was very nearly perfect!* Lewis, what do you mean?"

"She's too old for that kind of school."

"Old! She's ridiculously young for her age. Are you out of your senses? She isn't sixteen. And she needs badly to find her own level. What sort of school do you recommend?"

"How should I know? Some place where they won't change her. A quiet sort of place."

"Cleeve turns out a splendid type."

"Oh . . ."

He became too much exasperated even to swear. He flung down the length of the room and back again while Florence repeated in unquenchable amazement:

"But to say that Teresa . . . Teresa! Is nearly perfect!"

"Was."

An obscure relief stole over her. She lay back in her chair again and continued in calmer tones:

"She's getting to the awkward age. They'll both do that. Of course, they'll lose some of their charm; they are bound to become duller for a time. English schoolgirls are not interesting. But on the whole it's best. They were very insecure, poor darlings . . . so childish . . . so impressionable. . . ."

"Yes! Yes! That's it. Florence, I do entreat you not to send them back!"

"I must. I think it best for them, and so does my father. If we think that, there's no choice about it."

He collected himself for a final appeal.

"Have you written to Millicent yet . . . about that dinner?"

"No. Not yet."

"Couldn't you . . . couldn't we come to some agreement?"

"I'm quite ready for a compromise. You know that."

"I know. Well, listen! I'll give in about it; you ask her and I'll be civil. But won't you . . . "

"Won't I . . . ?"

"Keep them here a bit . . . the children. . . ."

"I'd like to, but I couldn't. It wouldn't be fair to make their future a bargain for my own convenience. I really think that they ought immediately to go back. It's not caprice."

"Very well. I've made you a fair offer."

She was much tempted to agree, for she did not like the idea of forcing the children back. But her conscience forbade it. On Monday morning, however, she got from both schools a definite refusal to receive the young Sangers again. Their impertinent, unruly ways endangered discipline, and their strange oaths were likely to become the scandal of many respectable homes during the Christmas holidays. Their elopements had been sensational and a bad precedent; the authorities considered that they had better be forgotten as soon as possible. It was clear that they must remain in Chiswick until new establishments could be found willing to take them, and under these circumstances Florence had no scruple in making a bargain. She would keep them till Easter if Lewis would be polite to Millicent sometimes. He agreed, and endured the dinner party with surprisingly good grace.

She did not suggest that he should apologize to his father. Save for the look of the thing she had no particular wish for a reconciliation with Sir Felix. Charles Churchill laughed at him. His influence was, she knew, due in a great measure to his own self-importance and effrontery; she was not prepared to stand patronage from such a man. Millicent was different; she clearly wished to meet, at Chiswick, those elusive people all known to Florence, whom she had so far failed to secure. She would behave herself. To have her there sometimes would look well and create an impression that Lewis was on good terms with his family.

"I'll ask her to tea when you're out," she told him.

"That's all right. It's your house."

"Now don't talk nonsense. It's just as much yours."

"Honey! says she."

"What did you say?"

"Nothing. A song. An echo of my infancy."

## CHAPTER XVI

FLORENCE was not long in discovering that the Sangers in London were more formidable than the Sangers in the Tyrol. In their house she had never felt so much of a stranger among them as she did now in her own; they seemed to have become, as a family, so much more corporate and definite. Christmas was scarcely over before she began to be aware that she had imported, not three friendless orphans, but an alien community, foreign and inimical to her way of life. She began to be very eager to get rid of them.

Of the three she liked Sebastian the best because his manners were always so charming. And he was talented; of that there was no doubt. After listening to some of his performances on the music-room piano she fully admitted his right to take his own career very seriously. She talked to him about it and was amazed at the calm certainty of his ideas. Pending some permanent settlement he agreed quite cheerfully to attend a small day school in the neighbourhood, for the benefit of his general education.

She wished that she could be as certain of her own future. She had, as yet, done nothing to attract the public attention to Lewis. For all the notice that any one took of him he might never have married an influential wife. This was entirely her own fault for, with half a dozen strings within her reach, she had not made up her mind which to pull. His waywardness unnerved her, and all the complications with the children had taken up time. She must bestir herself and do something.

Early in February she made up her mind that she must give



a party; not a large affair, but very choice. As the first move, it had great strategic importance. She was sure now that she had better not drag her shy young genius to other people's drawing rooms. He could not be trusted to behave; he must be allowed to have a solitary and retiring disposition. Those who wished to know him must come out to Chiswick where he could be seen to advantage. He needed his own background. The lovely little house which was to have the charm of Sanger's circus without its drawbacks, the river, Roberto, the mulberry tree, and Lewis's many waistcoats were all part of the picture. Her business lay in building the thing up, and in after years she often told herself that she could have done it had it not been for the children, the constant dragging, hostile influence of the enemy within her gates which made of every struggle with Lewis a battle with a group.

To her first party she meant to invite only people whom she knew rather well, and these were to be chosen upon two grounds: music and influence. Also they were all to be nice people who could enjoy each other's company. The whole thing was to be intimate and very pleasant. But she was a little troubled, because she thought that Millicent should be invited and she feared the effect upon Lewis.

She had found it difficult, in the first place, to make him listen to any of her plans. He had agreed readily enough that she should give a party and even seemed prepared to hand coffee cups if she would like. But he did not grasp its real importance. He showed much more interest and concern in a piano sonata which Sebastian was to play at a concert given by his little school. The fuss which they made over the selection of this piece, and the hours of practice which it seemed to require, were an annoyance to Florence. Once, after a meal at which they had all discussed nothing else, she said impatiently:

"What on earth does it matter if he plays the Mozart or the

Haydn? You say the Fantasia isn't good enough? They may thank their stars for getting anything as good."

"Indeed, they may," agreed Lewis. "But it's a trifle beyond his mark, I think."

"It's only the boys and their parents," she pointed out. "They won't know. . . ."

She stopped, biting her lip, aghast at what she had said. Lewis and the three Sangers were looking at her in a way she did not like; they made no comment, but their contemptuous surprise was galling to her. It was impossible always to remember how seriously they took themselves. Her own standards were high, but they were perfect maniacs. It was one of the thousand small occasions upon which she was made to feel that four people in the house were united in a point of view which was, to her, partially incomprehensible. She was still a little vexed about it, when, later in the day, she courageously approached Lewis upon the subject of Millicent's invitation.

"I don't want to offend her," she said. "She carries a good deal of weight in some quarters. It wouldn't be at all difficult for her to put a spoke in your wheel."

"I haven't got a wheel."

"She has contrived to get her opinion respected upon musical matters. I can't think why. I don't like her voice."

"A filthy rat squeak!"

"Still, I'd like to ask her."

"Then do! It's only for once."

"And I'm asking the Mainwarings . . . my cousins, you know. They're quite harmless. He's in the city, but he knows a lot about music. She's very nice. And then, if he'll come, I want to get Sir Bartlemy Pugh."

Sir Bartlemy Pugh had written a quantity of church music and some choral pieces in a melodious, old-fashioned style

which Lewis heartily despised. He made some strong remarks about it, but showed no other objection to the proposed invitation. Florence said serenely:

"You never heard any of it, dear. He's a charming old man. I've known him since I was that high. Then Doctor Dawson. He's another old friend I'd like to have."

Distinguished old men who had rocked her cradle were to be very much to the fore at these early parties. She used all her pretty ways to induce them to come. Doctor Dawson, who was a fine conductor but a terrible bear, said when she tackled him:

"Don't make eyes at me, Florence Dodd! I'm coming because I want to meet your husband."

Whereat she almost kissed him.

Lewis was quite pleased at the sound of his name, but looked less agreeable when she said that she wanted the Leyburns. He demanded to know who they were.

"Oh, you know! She's a very fine singer. She used to be the wife of Jimmy Jansen, but it didn't work. They run the Guild of Beauty, she and Edward Leyburn, I mean."

"What is the Guild of Beauty?" he asked unpromisingly.

"Those people who give those concerts down in the slums. You must know! They have quite a good choir; and they practically run the 'Nine Muses.' Their idea is to educate the popular taste in the Arts, beginning with the proletariat; that's such a much more promising field than the middle classes. They try to give the people really good music. That concert we went to at Notting Hill Gate was got up by them."

"Call that really good music?"

"N—no. . . . It was a good level for amateurs, and. . . ."

"Amateurs," said Lewis, pronouncing the word as if it

made him a little ill, "have no business to have a level. Is this Leyburn an amateur?"

"Don't talk in that tone of voice about amateurs. I'm one myself. Yes, he is. He sings very nicely, too. And he's done a lot of splendid work bringing music to the people."

"What's he want to do that for?"

"My dear Lewis! Why do you write music?"

"God knows!"

"Don't you want to give pleasure to people?"

"No."

"That's a pose."

"It's not! I'll swear it's not. I tell you this, Florence. The sight of a lot of them listening to my work, or Sanger's work, or anything decent, makes me sick. I swear then I won't write another note, if that's what it's for. Sanger, too! I know how he felt. Once I remember they made a demonstration round the door of a hall when he came out, shaking hands with him and so forth, and an old fellow came up and said: 'Mr. Sanger, I'd like to tell you of the pleasure that you've given to a poor working man.' 'Oh?' said Sanger. 'I suppose you think I ought to want to please every—— who can pay for a sixpenny ticket.'"

He paused to laugh at this retort, but Florence was not amused. She said, rather angrily:

"That was abominable, and not at all funny. Not a bit. It's a thing I can't understand in you, Lewis, the way you repeat the perfectly disgusting things that Sanger said as if they were good stories."

"They are good stories."

"It was particularly odious to say that to a poor man."

"He'd have said it, just the same, to a grand duke. I wish it had been my father that he said it to. No, but you miss the point. That's how Sanger felt about pleasing people. And I think I feel in much the same way."

"It's quite the wrong attitude. I hope you won't say that sort of thing to the people at my party."

"Write down beforehand what I have to say and I'll learn it off."

She was reassured a little by his manner of saying this. To reward him she asked if there was any guest he wanted.

"Yes," he said. "I'd like to ask Ike and Tony."

"Ike and Tony?" She was very doubtful. "Do you think they would enjoy it?"

"Tony loves any sort of party. And Ike would enjoy moving in such high circles. I want him to meet Millicent. He might give a cheque to the Guild of Beauty."

Florence shuddered.

"You know," she said, "I'd love to have them. But at this particular party they might feel just a trifle out of it. Everyone who is coming knows everyone else rather well."

"Then I shall feel out of it, and so will the children. It would be nice for us to have the Birnbaums to consort with."

Florence explained that the children were not to be there and they wrangled over this for several minutes. At length they compromised; he would ask Jacob without Antonia, and later on he would give a party himself for the Birnbaums and the children. Florence was most cordial over this idea.

"I'll have Nils Stavgröd," said Lewis. "He's coming next week for a season here."

"You know him?" cried Florence. "Of course we'll have him. Why didn't you suggest him before?"

"I didn't mean your party, I meant mine."

"Ask him to both."

"I doubt if he'd like yours. He wouldn't get on with Millicent. It isn't his line."

"There's no privilege in meeting Teresa and Paulina."

"He's met them. He knows them. He's like me and prefers them, I expect."

"You're very arrogant."

He said nothing.

"And small minded."

"Yes," he said complacently.

Exasperation almost choked her. For a few minutes she could say nothing; she sat still, wondering dumbly how much longer she was going to put up with their crazy ways. Not any longer, it seemed, for as soon as she had got her breath she heard herself proclaiming instructively:

"Your attitude is completely wrong. You put the wrong things first. Music, all art . . . what is it for? What is its justification? After all . . . "

"It's not for anything. It has no justification. It . . . "

"It's only part of the supreme art, the business of living beautifully. You can't put it on a pedestal above decency and humanity and civilization, as your precious Sanger seems to have done. Human life is more important."

"I know. You want to use it like electriclight. You buy a new saucepan for your kitchen and a new picture for your silver sty. I've seen it. My father's cultured. He . . . "

"It's a much-abused word, and one is shy of using it. But it means an important thing, which we can't do without."

"Can't we? I can! By God I can! Why do you suppose I ran away? To get free of it. Why do you think I loved Sanger?"

He broke into a wild tirade against the people who would chain him and his labour to the chariot wheels of a social structure. He tried to urge his own conviction that beauty and danger are inseparable; that ideas are best conceived in a world of violence; that any civilization must of necessity end by quenching the riotous flame of art for the sake of civic order. But he could not say what he meant. He was not

furnished with any of the right words for such a discussion, and used, moreover, so many inexcusably wrong ones that she lost the thread in her indignation.

"I can't stand this obscene language any more," she said, jumping up. "And I'm sure the world would be an unspeakably awful place if you could have your way in it."

"If you had yours, the only people who would enjoy themselves would be sick persons and young children."

"Well, why not? Lewis! I will not have it. Is it impossible to you to discuss anything without swearing? Very well, then! We'd better let it drop!"

After preliminaries like these it was scarcely surprising, even to Florence, that the party was a failure. Jacob Birnbaum, reporting on it to his wife, said:

"Lewis is a fool! He does not take his opportunities."

"Was it very grand?" asked Antonia, who had stayed awake on purpose to hear all about it.

She supposed that she had not been invited because she was not grand enough. In many ways she was a very humble creature in spite of a pearl rope and fifty pairs of silk stockings.

"No," said Jacob. "The women were *comme il faut*, but they had no style. You in your chemise are worth all of them together. You are not invited because Mrs. Dodd is growing tired of the Sangers. She does not think that you are altogether a credit. Also, Lewis is not to be a second Albert, even though she is a little like Evelyn, you understand?"

"I don't think I do. I think she's fond of us. But how is Lewis a fool? Was he drunk?"

"Not so much. But he is throwing away all his good chances. These people might help him. He has insulted everyone of them, I think, but old Doctor Dawson. There was this man there, Leyburn, who manages the 'Nine Muses,' does he not? He will produce 'Prester John' there, and

Lewis shall conduct it. But Lewis! He would do nothing but abuse the piece!"

"Well, but it's very bad. Sanger was ashamed of it himself. He was very young when he wrote it. At home we thought it a joke. It was howled down in Paris, and quite right, too."

"Still, it is foolish of Lewis. If his own work is to be heard later he should be glad to take these chances. And his wife is so very anxious, poor woman! I think she has arranged this party just for that. I wonder what she is saying to him now. There will be a terrible scene going on!"

But Jacob was wrong. Though the evening was an unmistakable disaster it led to no immediate quarrel.

Florence had known all day that she would not be able to control her husband; she was quite certain of it when, with a heavy heart, she went to dress. To encourage herself she put on a very beautiful new gown; and she needed all the spirit she could muster, for he was impossible from the first. Not that he succeeded in discomposing the guests, who were, for the most part, too well mannered and too fond of Florence, to show offence, even if they took it. But he forced her to be terribly ashamed of him. He interrupted Sir Bartlemy, contradicted Edward Leyburn, professed the blindest ignorance of any music save Albert Sanger's and his own, and played Millicent's accompaniments in such a manner that she was unable to get through a single song. Millicent was outraged past forgiveness and would not sing again, even when Edward Leyburn offered to play for her. Mrs. Leyburn, kind soul, filled the awkward gap by singing herself, though she had an audibly bad cold. Lewis listened for about ten bars and then left the room with a good deal of ostentatious noisiness, inviting the other men to come with him and have a drink. Jacob and Doctor Dawson followed him, and they seemed to be going to stay in the dining room for the rest of the night.



At last Sir Bartlemy went, too, and by some unknown persuasions brought them back, but the evening, by then, was past retrieving. Everybody, in spite of themselves, looked glum. Florence could not suppose that there was any charm about her house and she trembled to think of the tale which Millicent might make of it all.

The Mainwarings did their best and so did Sir Bartlemy. They were very sorry for Florence because she had married Lewis. But she had not invited them out to Chiswick to be that. Edward Leyburn, who adored her and had once wanted to marry her himself, made tremendous efforts. He sat down at the piano and embarked upon a regular recital of songs to save them all the spasmodic difficulties of conversation until it should be late enough that they could decently go home. Florence, for a time released from her hospitable struggles, sat down with her back to the light, hoping that her wretchedness was not too bleakly apparent. Her face felt quite stiff with the continued effort of smiling. She listened sadly to German Lieder full of true lovers, forests, and nightingales.

Her failure had crushed her so much that she was not even angry. To-morrow, after a night's sleep, if she could get it, she might recover enough spirit to scold Lewis. Just now she only wanted to crawl away into the dark and cry a little. Even the music unmanned her, for it brought to her mind the spring and the Tyrol and all the little flowers that she had picked with her lover, as they wandered over the mountains. And she remembered her happy, confident schemes for their life together; and the first days of her marriage when she had forgotten schemes and plans and lost herself, for a time, in the delight of being with him. At last she turned to look at him, wondering if he, too, would remember. She found his eyes upon her, strange, bright, questioning; a glance which she could not interpret.

She glanced at the clock and saw that it was twenty min-

utes past eleven. She had instructed Roberto to beat up some eggs at a quarter past that she might make zabaglione, a dish at which she excelled. As quietly as possible she slipped out of the room and into the pantry, where he had put a tray with the Marsala, the powdered almonds and the little glass cups in which the confection was to be served. Just for a moment, giving way to the exhaustion of disappointment, she sank down on a chair and leant her head against the pantry dresser. She was thankful for the dark and quiet.

She felt shattered; as though she could scarcely face the brightness of the kitchen.

"But taking in the zabaglione will make it easier," she said to herself. "They won't know what it is, and I can tell them about it. It's something new, anyhow!"

She heard herself saying brightly:

"It's only Marsala and beaten eggs, cooked ever so little, just to set it . . ."

She thought that Roberto had come in from the kitchen and was turning to tell him that she was ready when she felt herself lifted up from her chair and caught close in the arms of her lover.

"Lewis!" she whispered. "You oughtn't to be here! Go back there and look after them."

"That's all right. They're busy singing. I've come to help you with the zabaglione."

But he seemed in no hurry to let her make it and she murmured in expostulation:

"Roberto is in the kitchen."

Lewis stretched out a hand behind him and shut the kitchen door.

"But we can't make zabaglione in the dark."

"We'll go in a minute. Why be in such a hurry? You were sitting doing nothing when I came in. Tell me!"

She was lost again. When he was like this, he could do what he pleased with her. She sighed.

"Those songs," she said, ". . . they made me think of the Tyrol. Did they remind you of those times?"

"Yes."

"Somehow . . . since then . . . Oh, my dear Lewis! What has come over you?"

"Don't you know?"

"Oh, well . . . I suppose I do. But you're so . . . sudden."

"You're so beautiful," he muttered. "Florence . . . I wish all these people would go away."

"They'll go soon," she said soothingly. "But we must go back to them now. This is no time for dalliance. You're tearing my frock!"

"I'll get you another," he said grandly, forgetting that he had not a penny of his own in the world.

"That won't make me presentable at this immediate moment. Come along. . . ."

And she slipped into the kitchen, where Roberto was looking quite pale and spent with beating the eggs for such a long time.

And so her ill-starred party did not end, as Jacob had supposed, in a scene. But it marked an epoch. From that day a subtle change came over the house at Strand-on-the-Green. This was in time perceived by all its inmates. But the first to feel it was Roberto, who had not, up till then, found himself entirely at ease in his new quarters. He discovered that they were suddenly becoming more home-like. In this clean, strange, frigid house, he recognized an atmosphere which he could not have defined but to which he was well accustomed. It spread rapidly from his cosy kitchen to the rooms occupied by his employers.

He first noticed a change on the morning after the party

when he took to Mrs. Dodd her early cup of tea. Usually she would answer his knock or she would wake up when he put the tray on the little table beside her bed. While he drew up the blinds she would address herself with energy to the business of rousing her companion. Upon this morning, however, she continued to sleep, after the blinds were up and with the newly risen sun shining right into the room. Their slumber was so profound that discreet little Roberto paused and peered at them anxiously and saw that Madame's lovely hair, generally braided back at night into a thick rope, was loose and flung all across the pillow in a dark cloud about the still paleness of her face. Roberto, who admired Madame above all women, approved of this; he peeped at her with appreciation and with that strange, wordless pity which a sleeping person will awake in an observer, the compassion of a guarded spirit for helplessness. He stole out and stumbled over something on the floor; it was the new dress, flung down as not even a petticoat should have been flung. Roberto, lately converted to neatness, was shocked. He picked up the gown and spread it over a chair; next he rescued a silk shift. Then, realizing that the unaccountable disorder which had overtaken the room was something significant and past his mending, he smiled broadly and slid out on tiptoe. Down in the kitchen, as he fried the bacon, he sang Puccini and Verdi with a joyous heart.

Nor was his peace of mind shattered when, a week later, he was aware of a dispute, a quarrel so formidable that the house literally rang with it. This, too, was quite in order. He listened respectfully through the bedroom keyhole to two voices, a shrill voice and a surly voice, and he said to the children with many winks and nods:

"Lewis and Madame . . . dey fight . . . I tink  
 . . . yes. . . ."

To Florence, however, this quarrel was another step in the

slow process of defeat. It was devastating to her, this sudden discovery that her temper could be ungovernable. For a few days she had abandoned herself to the reassurance of being loved, stifling her fears, doubts, and regrets in that brief oblivion which was becoming for her, as it was for Lewis, a means of escape. Nothing had been done to reconcile their divergent points of view; the issues were merely shelved, for neither was really prepared to yield to the other. And when a dispute broke out it was somehow the more bitter because of their recent intense preoccupation with each other.

Always they seemed to fight about such foolish things. This time it was the old, wretched question of Teresa's future. Lewis was determined that the child should not go to school again. He spoilt her outrageously. For the other two a settlement seemed possible, but about Teresa there was no agreeing. The fight became unbelievably fierce, until Florence noticed an inflection in her voice which reminded her of the railings of Linda Cowlard. She fell silent, horrified and ashamed, and Lewis got in the last word.

"If Tessa leaves this house," he vowed, "I leave it. She's the only thing that makes life tolerable. So I warn you!"

And he rushed out of the room and fell over Roberto, who was listening at the keyhole, so that the sound of cursing seemed to go on all across the landing and down the stairs. The absurdity of his last remark soon restored Florence to her normal serenity, but for a few minutes after he had gone she felt herself transported by a resentment so passionate that it seemed as if she had never been angry before.

## CHAPTER XVII

"PRESTER JOHN" was produced at *The Nine Muses* in the course of the spring with a success which justified all the risks taken by an enterprising management on its behalf. Charles Churchill, at his breakfast table, read a glowing account of it in the newspaper, the very same paper which had reported Sanger's death so bleakly a year ago.

"We've changed all that!" thought Charles, holding the column close up to his short-sighted eyes. ". . . 'a masterly performance' . . . hm . . . hm . . . 'surely the audience at *The Nine Muses* is the most intelligent in the world.' . . . Why do they always say that, I wonder? I suppose because it's the sort of audience which reads the notices next morning . . . 'the enterprise of this undertaking' . . . dammit! The whole column's about *The Nine Muses*! Ah, no! Here we have it! . . . Sanger . . . 'neglected too long . . . a national possession!' . . . Well, well! 'A shattering message! Heaven help us! . . . 'and yet, surely, the most vocal music ever written . . . the second act one vast lyric!' . . . What's this? What the devil's this? 'Mr. Leyburn's conducting' . . . Leyburn! . . . 'we venture to think that Mr. Leyburn a little mistook the subtle tempo of the first chorus!' . . . But where, I wonder, was my precious son-in-law?"

Lewis should have conducted the opera; Charles knew that. He also knew that Florence was building on its success; that she regarded the engagement as a great thing. He scratched his head and read the column again and tried to

suppose that Leyburn was a printer's error for Dodd, but it would not do. Very much dispirited, and wondering if some untoward accident could have occurred at Chiswick, he went on with his breakfast.

By the second post came a short, sad little note from Florence to say that the Sanger opera had gone off quite well, but that Lewis had fallen out with the management at the last moment so that Edward Leyburn had taken his place.

"Edward did very well," she wrote, "considering the short notice."

"But she was set on it!" muttered Charles, looking at her letter. "Since when has she learnt to take a disappointment quietly? This is serious! I shall really have to go and see."

He had a horror of interfering parents. He had been determined, from the first, to let Florence manage her crazy marriage in her own way. He had said his say and she would not listen to him. She was old enough to know her own mind. But, on the other hand, he was very fond of her. He was sure that she was unhappy, and there was something in this note which read like an appeal for help. He thought he knew where he could assist her. She did not say so, but for some weeks he had guessed that she was growing rather tired of her young cousins. It was probably time they were removed from Chiswick. At least he could help her over that.

Soon after the production of "Prester John" he discovered that he could spare a week-end to his daughter, so he packed his bag, wired to Strand-on-the-Green, and set off.

He was received by his niece Teresa, who told him that Florence had gone into the country for the day, before his wire came. The children, she said, were out fishing, and Lewis had some men with him. Would Charles have tea with her, or would he rather sit with Lewis? Charles voted for tea promptly, whereupon she went to the top of the

stairs and launched a flood of shrill, abusive Italian downwards at Roberto. Then she came back into the drawing room and sat herself down to entertain her uncle.

Charles looked her over sharply and with a sense of surprise that was faintly pleasant. He had seen her only once, just after her arrival in England. Since then she had grown a good deal and he rather liked her looks. She was plain, perhaps; at least, she was not like any of the Churchills. But she was a friendly creature and seemed ready to be civil to him. He began at once on his mission and asked how long she intended to stay at Strand-on-the-Green. She said she supposed she would stay until she had to go.

"Oh," said he. "Then you are depending on my daughter to turn you out?"

"You mean she doesn't want us?" said Teresa, looking startled.

"I've never heard her say so. Still, as a guest, you must feel it a little . . ."

"A guest!"

She opened her eyes.

"Aren't you a guest? What is a guest, do you think?"

"A person who's been invited . . ." she began, and pulled up, turning quite pink. Then she recovered herself and said: "But children, you know, are forced to be somebody's guest, if they have no home of their own. It's part of the undignified state of being a child."

"Do you call yourself a child, miss?"

"I do not. But your daughter Florence does, and on that account she has to keep me in her house."

"I see. Fourteen, aren't you?"

"Fifteen. I've had a birthday since I last saw you."

"Dear me! I'd forgotten. Very remiss of me!"

"Let me give you some tea."

He recognized a slight inflection of Florence in the way she



said this. But there was nothing of Florence in the meal which she had ordered; it consisted largely of a cottage loaf and a trayful of breakfast cups.

"I said the big cups," she commented, with some complacency. "Men always like them."

Charles beamed. He liked but seldom got them. He said:

"Fifteen! An uncle has no business to forget these things, has he? Yes! Two lumps if you please, my dear."

He pulled out his pocket-book.

"I think it's clever of you to have got it right within a year," said Teresa. "Bread? What is this for? Me? Oh!"

"Rather belated, I'm afraid. You'll be telling me you're sixteen before we've finished tea."

"What am I to do with it?"

"Get yourself . . ."

He could not at all guess what she would be likely to get for herself, so he said vaguely that it was to be something pretty.

"A pretty thing," said Teresa thoughtfully, looking at the note in her hand. "With all my heart; the next pretty thing I see. Have another cup?"

"And how did 'Prester John' go off?" asked Charles boldly.

"Really . . . I . . . couldn't say . . ." she answered slowly.

"Why? Weren't you there?"

"Oh, yes. We were all there. But we don't understand the people in this country. We thought it was very bad. It was only half rehearsed. And that Mr. Leyburn can't conduct, can he?"

"That I can't say. Why didn't my son-in-law conduct?"

"Lewis? Of course! He's your son-in-law. How funny!"

I never thought of you and him as being related. Well, . . . no . . . He was going to do it, and then he couldn't."

"Why not?"

"Well, you know, 'Prester John' is such a very poor opera. Sanger thought so himself; my father, I mean. It was awful that they chose just that one; Lewis hated it. He was very, very fond of Sanger. And at the rehearsals he got wild because it was so bad. And at last he couldn't bear it and they had a quarrel."

"So that was it! Then it wasn't a success?"

"But it sounded like one! They clapped! And cheered! I've never seen Sanger's work better received, not even the good pieces. Always it's been just a few people. But these were all so enthusiastic; and the papers next day didn't any of them say how bad it really was. We couldn't help laughing at first. It was so ridiculous. And Lewis laughed, too, quite loud. And then, when Florence told us to be quiet, I looked round and saw that nobody else was amused."

"Where were you sitting?"

"In the front; in the stalls. And we got there late, so we began badly, somehow."

Charles was getting a fairly accurate idea of the sort of evening that Florence must have spent. She had admitted beforehand that she should feel a trifle conspicuous, escorting Sanger's children to hear a first English performance of Sanger's music. The most intelligent audience in the world was largely composed of her personal acquaintances. It was a pity if his nephew and nieces had attracted even more attention by behaving ill. And Lewis, too, had been told to be quiet. It was monstrous! Teresa got a severe little lecture upon civil manners in public places, which she took very meekly. She promised to do better another time.

"There won't probably be another time," Charles told her. "I don't expect Florence will take you to another."

"Oh, yes, but she will. Lewis is to conduct his Symphony at the Regent's Hall in May. We are all going to that, and I promise that we will behave."

"Oh?" he murmured, half to himself. "She's pulled that off, has she?"

"Oh, no," said Teresa quickly. "That has nothing to do with her. My brother-in-law, Jacob Birnbaum, managed that. He's Lewis's friend. When we want anything of that kind done he always sees to it."

Charles perceived that the word "we" indicated a community to which his daughter did not, presumably, belong. Teresa gave him to understand that the concert at the Regent's Hall would be a really important affair.

"Why can't she leave the fellow to paddle his own canoe?" he thought. "If he really has a pull with these Jew financiers, they'll do more for him than all her gentlemanly friends put together."

Aloud he said:

"So she's forgiven you, has she?"

"Not quite," said Teresa, after a little consideration. "But she will. She has so much . . . " no adequate English word arrived, so she shyly tried another language: ". . . so much *bonité*!"

Charles agreed. It was the right word for that particular benevolence with which Florence seasoned her obstinacy.

"But, Uncle Charles!"

"Yes, my dear?"

"When you said about guests . . . Do you mean that we ought to go away?"

"Not yet," he said hastily. "Not until some suitable establishment is found for you."

"You know that Sebastian has got a scholarship in Doctor

Dawson's choir school? He wants to go there. And Lina wants to go on the stage. Only in France, because she can speak Racine. Have you heard her? She can really."

"No. But Florence tells me that she shows promise."

"Well, but there's a school where she can go in Paris. Would that be a suitable establishment?"

"I daresay. I've come here, partly, to discuss it. If you children have professions that you want to pursue . . ."

"I know. I've none."

"Well. That's no harm. It's early yet."

"But Florence says that I'm to go to school again."

"Would you like that?"

"I couldn't endure it," she said, with a quiet intensity which startled him.

"But, my dear! What's to be done with you? I'd be quite ready to fall in with your views if you wanted to specialize. With your upbringing, it's late in the day to begin upon general education. I quite see that. I'm sure it's best for the other two to go their own ways. But you say yourself you've no . . ."

"I can't help it. I know what it is to have talent. I know that I've none. I love music. But that's not enough. I love apples, but I don't mean to be a greengrocer. It has to be something more than that; something that comes so far first that there isn't any question of a second."

"And there's nothing that comes quite first with you?"

She was silent and he wondered how any one could be so misguided as to treat her like a child. The sad thoughtfulness of her face was old; older, in its calm resignation, than any expression he had ever caught on the face of his daughter.

"Everybody has something that comes quite first," she said at last. "But sometimes, you know, it's complicated."

"Not always a thing," suggested Charles gently. "Often,

especially for a woman, it's a person. That is more complicated."

At once he felt that he had been a little impertinent. He said hastily that she must not distress herself; very few people had got a profession at fifteen. She must not let herself be hustled by the precocity of the rest of her family. But in his heart he felt that he was misstating her case. Her trouble was not the bewildered groping of adolescence for a goal in life, but rather the sad finality of a woman who has beheld her destiny too young. His next attempt was towards another kind of consolation. Life, he suggested, was, after all, a very amusing affair. It was wise to cultivate a taste for it. There were so many entertaining things to be done. For a young woman, just entering upon the world, the opportunities of enjoyment were boundless. Didn't she think so?

"Not in a girls' school."

"Well, no. Probably not. But education is a good investment."

"Is it? Are you educated?"

"Comparatively speaking . . . yes."

"Are you so very happy? Happier than an uneducated man?"

"I've been singularly fortunate in my life, Teresa. I've had remarkably little to bear; less, I daresay, than you have had already. But I can honestly say that, in such trouble as has come to me, a philosophic outlook, which is the fruit, one of the fruits, of a good education, has been of use to me."

"Can't an uneducated person have a philosophic outlook?"

"By the light of natural wisdom? Yes. But it's harder and slower. And you must realize this, Teresa. Unhappiness is, to a certain extent, the sure lot of every one of us. We cannot escape it. We can only brace ourselves to endure it. But we have it in our power to do a great deal towards

securing our happiness. That does lie in our hands. We can enlarge our tastes and interests and perceptions. That is the chief use of education, to widen the resources."

"Putting your eggs into a lot of baskets instead of one?"

"It's safer, you know."

"Oh, safety! I don't think we care so very much about it."

Again that odd use of "we"; Charles remembered it later. He agreed that too much is sometimes sacrificed for security.

"Well, but you say that education helped you. What kind? What have you had that you value most?" she asked.

"A thorough grounding in the Classics," said Charles promptly. "For it's the key to the humanities. And, on top of it, a man should travel and see life . . ."

"Very well. I've travelled. And I've seen life."

"Pardon me! I disagree with you. I don't think you have seen much life as yet. Of its raw beginnings you may have seen something, but not of the finished product. To see life to any purpose you must be conversant, at least, with the ways of polite society. A polite society. I don't care where."

"Society at school was not polite. I could tell you tales that would curl your hair! Upon my word, I often thought there was more civility in my father's house. Have some more tea?"

"Thank you. I will have a third."

She did not tell him that he had had five, but pursued her theme, asking guilelessly:

"Could I have a thorough classical grounding?"

Charles told her, in some detail, that she certainly could. It was a subject very close to his heart; all his life he had hoped great things from the higher education of women. Nothing, he maintained, could form the mind of a young girl better than the study of Latin and Greek. He would teach her enough arithmetic to enable her to keep accounts neatly,

the elements of geography, the dates of the kings of England, and then he would plunge her into classical literature. In her teens, she should read nothing else. He had meant to educate his daughter in this way, but had been defeated by the other educationists who surrounded her. At fifteen she had been so very anxious to form his mind that she gave him no opportunity of meddling with hers. For this he blamed Cleeve; he had a suspicion that Cleeve was full of earnest, cultivated women who read Robert Browning and wanted degrees. A dreadful type! They had corrupted Florence. But the young female now so persistently supplying him with tea was virgin soil; none of these wretched, efficient governesses had been at her. And she seemed intelligent.

"I suppose," she said, "that I'd get a classical grounding at school?"

"Yes, I daresay," grumbled Charles, "in this disgusting new pronunciation that I can't make head or tail of."

"I don't believe that you have any more use for schools than I have."

"You must learn to get on with the other women."

"Must I?"

"Yes, you must. A boy goes to school for that, to find his level in a crowd of youngsters of his own age. And so does a girl, I suppose. But I declare it's all they're good for, these places!"

"Well, but which do you prefer? A woman who is very charming or a woman who knows a lot?"

"A charming woman can be very well informed . . ."

"Yes, but would you rather have an ignorant woman with charm or a well-informed woman without?"

"You're driving me into a corner! Of course I admit that the world would come to an end if women weren't charming. But they'll persist in being that, thank Heaven, whatever

sort of education they get. And, Teresa, one of the most charming women I ever knew came to grief simply, so it seemed to me, for want of a wider education . . . a better-regulated mind . . . ”

He paused and sighed. Teresa looked at him and asked suddenly:

“Was that my mother?”

“Yes, my dear.”

“Were you very fond of her?”

“She was our only sister. We were very proud of her.”

“Did she go to a school like Cleeve?”

“Cleeve! Not she!”

She saw that he had no high opinion of Cleeve, and presently she began to tell him funny stories of the good ladies there and her adventures during her brief school career. He found her very entertaining. Her way of talking had a turn that was at once innocent and shrewd, infantile and yet full of observation, adorned with a quaint, half-literary idiom, and full of inflections borrowed from other languages. She was refreshing, after a long surfeit of cultured provincialism. He saw ignorance in her, and childishness and a good deal of untutored passion; but of pose there was no trace and she was without small sentimentalities or rancours. He thought that he discerned the delicate beginnings of a noble mind, a grandeur of outlook which would well repay development. It struck him that the Sanger genius, driving all the other children to some practice of the arts, might here take the form of a particular aptitude for companionship, that rare touch on life which makes some souls so valuable to their friends. He could not imagine why Florence had not written more warmly about her. She was such very good fun. And if, as he half guessed, there was some tragedy behind her, that was her own business and she was perfectly able to deal with it herself. She was a courageous little



creature. He wished that he could have asked her how Florence and Lewis were getting on; it was a point upon which her opinion would have been useful.

It was an odd thing, but he had a queer sort of liking for his son-in-law. If it had not been for their unfortunate relationship he could have seen several merits in the young man. To begin with, it was enjoyable to remember that this was the son of Fulsome Felix. A great deal could be forgiven to him on that account. Charles was forced frequently to put up with the company of Sir Felix Dodd, who was always coming to Cambridge in some capacity or other which could not be ignored. He could endure now the atmosphere of a glorified board school which always clung to that gentleman, remembering with inward chuckles the blot in the scutcheon. Lewis must have been too much even for the Dodd complacency.

And that night, when Lewis joined Charles and Teresa in the drawing room, he was at his unusual best. He brought with him his two friends, Doctor Dawson, who was already known to Charles, and an obscure organist from somewhere or other. It was the first time that Charles had ever seen him in company of his own choosing, for his friends were a little nervous of coming to Strand-on-the-Green. He was talking of his work in a simple and modest way that showed how completely he was at his ease. Charles, by long habit, was quick to sift the cleverness of a clever young man for any grains of real gold that might lurk there. In this case he soon divined something more solid than mere promise. He knew nothing of music, but Dawson did, and he caught, now and then, a trace of something more than respect in the attitude of his old friend; there were signs there of affection and a deep admiration.

"The fellow has real ability," thought Charles. "Dawson knows. Poor Florence! She's right there, as far as I can see."

Presently it occurred to him, with a slight shock of surprise, how very well Teresa fitted into the picture. She seemed almost like Lewis's belonging. She had made one or two quite pertinent remarks; that was natural, since they were on ground which was familiar to her. But her chief business was to minister to them and this she did rather nicely; her hospitality had no polish but it was suitable, somehow, to the company. She made a fresh pot of tea and, finding that Doctor Dawson had missed his lunch, she fetched up some corned beef. Charles, watching how she slapped it down on the table with a kind of offhand geniality, thought that she would have made a very good barmaid. Then it struck him that it was her coöperation which had given Lewis the air of being so pleasant a host. He could imagine the pair of them entertaining with the greatest success, not in this house but in some queer, unmistakable house of their own. He told himself that no party can go well unless the host and hostess are inspired by the same social ideals. It is upon such occasions that the inner concord between man and wife is made most manifest. Only that Lewis and Teresa were not man and wife. For a moment he was almost thinking of them as if they were, because they ought to have been.

This idea grew upon Charles as he watched them, and it seemed strange to him that a thing so obvious should have occurred to nobody else. To his eyes it grew plainer every moment. The pair seen thus together, at a moment of unconscious ease, contrived to produce the united front, the pleasant assurance of a perfectly well-matched couple. Teresa was, probably, the only woman in the world who could manage this man; she would respect his humours without taking them too seriously, she would never require him to behave correctly, and, if he annoyed her, she would reprove him good-humouredly in the strong terms which

he deserved and understood. How could they have failed to see it? Lewis was a fool! If he had married little Teresa she would have made a man of him, whereas mated with Florence he was nothing but a calamity.

How much of a calamity was abundantly demonstrated when Florence returned, an elegant stranger breaking in upon them, the owner, one remembered, of a room which was not usually strewn with kitchen knives and corned beef. Immediately the party went to pieces; a sort of constraint settled upon them. Not that she failed in hospitality; she was most charming to everybody, and especially kind to the young organist because he was insignificant and had a provincial accent. Always she would be nice to her husband's friends. Charles thought she managed very well, for nobody made any attempt to help her out. Her manner to her husband was, he noticed, a little staccato; she was nervous. He surmised that there had been a fine explosion after "Prester John," but of this there were only the faintest indications. He hardly knew how to diagnose the sense of a false note, a roughness, a want of decorum in her posture. Something very wrong was happening.

He watched her closely and at last discovered the flaw. It shocked him excessively. She was being, there was no other word for it, consistently nasty to her young cousin. In fact, she seemed scarcely able to let the child alone; her sarcasms and her biting reproofs were so continuous as to sound almost mechanical, like a bad habit. She was exhibiting in that quarter a most lamentable failure of the "*bonté*," which used to be an integral part of her disposition. Circumstances were becoming too much for her natural generosity. She was not only jealous of Teresa's standing with Lewis but of her intimacy with all his friends. They had been, when she came in, a close convivial group; she had tried to join in, talking cleverly, but they had not quite accepted

her. She got homage for her beauty and her wit, but that was not entirely what she wanted. She wished them to consider her as one of themselves and this distinction they reserved for Teresa, an impudent chit, who had only to put in her oar, quote an opinion of Sanger's, to make them stop and listen to her. Florence was not going to be cut out, in her own drawing room, by an unformed schoolgirl, and she was consequently a great deal too profuse in small snubs.

It was, in the father's eyes, pitiful that a beloved daughter should thus expose her sufferings in an exhibition of petty jealousy. But he had not observed the situation for very long before he saw that it held great dangers. Teresa bore it all well enough; he could not help admiring the large, good temper with which she held her own in the contest. Perhaps she did not grasp the underlying spite of the attacks made upon her. It was for her friend to feel resentment on her behalf; nothing of their byplay was lost upon Lewis. He seemed to receive all Teresa's wounds with a double bitterness. If Florence had wished to drive him from her, she could not have chosen a better way.

"A pretty kettle of fish!" thought Charles wrathfully. "Does she want to bully those two into making a bolt of it? The sooner that little girl is packed off to school, the better!"

He had quite a good opinion of Teresa but, recollecting how she had been brought up, he had little reliance upon her principles or her prudence in such an affair. He was almost sure that she loved this undeserving wretch; when once he had suspected the thing every gesture that she made, every word that she spoke, bore witness to it. Should Lewis wake to his own need of her, nothing in the world could save her; her security lay in his blindness. She obeyed no laws; she knew none. She would inevitably follow the man if he beckoned to her; Charles could think of no possible reason why she should not. And here was Florence ordering her off to bed

as though she were a tiresome baby, quoting some absurd doctor's order about bed at seven three nights a week. She was skipping out of the room when she caught her uncle's eye and came back to him.

"Good-night, *Lieber Herr*!"

"Good-night, baggage!"

"How long are you staying with us, if one may ask?"

"A week-end."

"Dear me! That's uncommonly short! I'd hoped you might stay long enough to give me a classical education."

"I'll begin to teach you Latin if you'd like. Then, later on, you can come to Cambridge and we'll begin Greek."

It seemed to him that any snare was worth trying with so wild a little bird.

"I know Latin!"

"You do, do you?"

"Some I do." She sang in a steady, poised little voice: "*Cum vix justus sit securus*."

Lewis, across the room, stirred slightly and turned his head to listen. Charles thought:

"What's the good of school? She'll run away."

"That," she was saying, "means that even good people will scarcely be safe, poor things . . ."

She kissed him and made off. Florence immediately called her back and reminded her that she had not said good-night to the rest of the company. Whereupon, she kissed them all rapidly but with much warmth, and was gone before any fresh reproof could fall upon her. Assuredly it was not easy to put her in her place. Florence had to laugh, though she offered quite unnecessary apologies for the manners of her young cousin.

"Not at all," said Charles. "We like it."

The obscure organist, whose name everybody forgot, had been greatly captivated. He quoted softly:

"Say I'm weary, say I'm sad . . . "

"Say that health and wealth have missed me," chimed in Doctor Dawson, with perfect truth, for he was a poor man and gouty.

"Say I'm getting old . . . " grumbled Charles rather glumly.

Lewis said nothing, having no idea what they were talking about. A good many of Tessa's kisses had already come his way so perhaps he regarded them as a commonplace.

## CHAPTER XVIII

CHARLES, Florence, Lewis, and Teresa sat together at breakfast. Sebastian, who always rose early, had finished his meal and could be heard in the music room practising the Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues with precision and energy. Paulina was not yet down and a lecture on unpunctuality was awaiting her. Teresa was blowing on her tea to cool it in a vulgar way; Florence wearily told her not to.

"And why must you do your hair in that way?" she complained. "Dragging it all back! It's terribly unbecoming; your forehead is quite high enough as it is. Why don't you cover it?"

"If I did I'd look like one of those little girls in shops called 'Cash.' Wouldn't I, gentlemen?"

Charles and Lewis left off reading their letters and looked at Teresa's forehead. They liked it. Charles said:

"If you want to look pretty, hussy, you'd better grow a fringe and hide it."

Lewis wondered; he scarcely knew why it was that he found Tessa so beautiful to look at. He said:

"In a year or two, Florence, when you've fattened her, she'll look like that picture in your bedroom . . . that very startled lady with a towel round her head."

"The Delphic Sibyl? What nonsense, Lewis!"

"But she is," said Charles. "She's very like! I hadn't seen it before . . . It's on a smaller, slighter scale, of course . . ."

"The Delphic Sibyl has a very noble face."

"So has Tessa," said both the men.

Florence pursed her lips and said rather acidly:

"I'm sorry, I'm afraid I don't see it. Except that there's a sort of Michelangelo look about all the family . . . "

"My admirers," said Teresa complacently, "are mostly of the opposite sex."

"I think you had better do that entrance examination to-day," Florence retorted. "If you go to Harrogate at Whitsun, they'll want to know how to place you. You can do it in the drawing room, this morning, where it will be quite quiet."

"I don't expect I shall be able," said Teresa gloomily.

"Oh, yes, you will. It's quite easy. Only the junior entrance. Miss Cassidy thinks that, as you are under sixteen and very backward, you'd better be entered as a junior, till they have got you on a bit."

"How does she know I'm backward?"

"Because I told her. It's not your fault. You'll pick up."

Teresa said nothing but gazed tearfully at her plate of porridge. Florence exclaimed, with a little laugh:

"Oh, dear me! I don't believe you like being told you're backward! Funny, funny child! She's getting quite pink!"

"She's saying all this for your good," put in Lewis, leaning round the table to see how pink Teresa was. "You should be grateful to her; I've often thought it was a pity you had such a high-stomached opinion of yourself."

"I can talk three languages besides English."

"Yes, your languages are good. But you know nothing else."

"I've read Shakespeare."

"I should hope you had," Florence told her crushingly.

"The juniors at Cleeve went to bed at eight o'clock. And in recreation they did things for each other's albums.



And they mightn't get books out of the library. I'd sooner go to hell."

"You must work hard and try to get into the senior school as soon as you can. And you must grow up a little. You're such a baby for your age."

"Shall I have to play hockey? At Cleeve I didn't."

"You won't unless you're fit for it," put in Charles testily.

"Of course not," agreed Florence. "But by the autumn term, when hockey begins, I daresay she will be able to play."

She knew this was not likely, but life would be unbearable if Teresa were allowed to make a fuss about her health. She needed bracing in every direction. Lewis asked gleefully how long she was to stay at this school.

"Three years," said Florence. "Yes, Father! It will be quite that, I should think, before she catches up."

"Well," muttered Teresa, "there are some things I shall know. At Cleeve we didn't know we had to pay to go to church. We thought it was free. We nearly died of fright the first time we saw that bag coming round. We thought we'd be turned out. I had to take sixpence belonging to the girl next me; she'd left it on her prayer-book and didn't see me pinch it."

"Stealing! You've no morals, hussy!"

"Not at all. The sixpence was going in the bag, anyhow. Poor Lina had to pull a button off her drawers to put in."

"I hope somebody told you that these things are not done," said Florence, with a frown at Charles, who guffawed.

"Quite a number of people did. That was what we disliked at Cleeve, being taught how to behave by five hundred people at once. It's the way they do things in this country."

"Well, if you run contrary to public opinion you must expect to suffer for it. But I hope you'll be wiser now."

Lewis passed his cup for more coffee and got his guns into

position. He thought that his wife ought to be paid out for the way she was baiting Teresa, and he embarked upon a counter-attack.

"I think I agree with Tessa," he said to Charles. "This is not a country I like. I'm leaving it for good as soon as my concert's over."

Florence started and gave him a quick glance. In the heat of the scene she had made after "Prester John" he had declared that he detested England and would live with her no longer. But he had not repeated the threat, and she had come to believe that he had not really meant it.

"No," said Charles, blinking at Lewis over his spectacles. "Is that so?"

"Didn't Florence tell you we've almost agreed to part?"

"It is fortunate that you can agree upon such a delicate subject," murmured Charles.

"She, you see, can't live in comfort anywhere else, can you, Florence?"

"Not permanently," said Florence.

She was determined that he should not draw her into an argument at this time and in this company. He was probably only teasing her. If he really persisted in his desire to live abroad she would let the house and go with him, but not just yet. He might change his mind again, and she could do nothing until she had disposed of the children. She thought that it might be a wise plan to let him go alone, after the concert, and when he had seen how he liked it he might give up this foolish way of talking. In any case, nobody in the world should know that it hurt her.

Later, when she was alone with her father, she gave him her version of the affair. Lewis, she said, had got a temporary attack of nerves and was best out of England. She herself would follow him as soon as she had got rid of Teresa. Charles, at this, looked very thoughtful, and she was afraid

that he was going to ask awkward questions. But at last he surprised her by saying:

"Do you know, my love, I'm not altogether sure that I think you're wise in your manner to that little girl."

Instantly she was up in arms.

"You encourage her, and it's not kind. That pert manner may be very amusing, but it will get her into trouble later on, and it shouldn't be laughed at."

He had spent most of the night thinking on this matter. It seemed to him imperative that Florence should be warned in some way. But he hardly knew how to begin. He ventured:

"Do you think this plan of school is really wise? Is she strong enough?"

"That's the only doubt. Otherwise, it's the very thing she needs . . . firm discipline and to have the nonsense laughed out of her by other children of the same age."

"She's old . . . in some ways . . . for her age . . . " he hesitated.

"On the contrary, she's a great baby for her age."

"That's where you are mistaken, I think. She would respond better if you treated her as a responsible person."

"How can I, when she behaves like a young hooligan?"

"This life, remember, is new to her."

"She isn't attempting to adjust herself to it."

"It strikes me that she's absorbing new ideas at every pore. Give her time and they'll bear fruit. But truly I don't think she'll have enough elbow room at school."

"These Sanger children seem to think that they have merely to say that they don't like a thing to be free of the necessity of enduring it. It's sheer unruliness."

"I thought that it would not take you very long to exhaust the charms of the Sanger children."

"I can do with the others. But I don't like Teresa."

"That's it!" Charles now spoke rather sternly. "You don't like her, and you make no secret of it. Is that just?"

"Oh, I've tried to be just. But she's so hard! She has such a forward, disagreeable nature."

"Try to see things from her point of view a little. Think how she's been brought up! Not only is she ignorant of all the finer shades of conduct, but she's grown up with no conception of the word 'ought.' She has only her instincts, her affections, and her quick wits to guide her. Fortunately, these are all singularly uncorrupted; at least, so it seems to me."

"Does it?"

"Yes, it does, when you think of the sort of life she's been used to. She's intensely receptive. And now, when she's almost formed, as far as intelligence goes, she is uprooted and brought here. She's pitchforked into a new world, and we expect her to conform at once to our standards, our very complicated standards, of existence. She discovers, piece-meal, the principles underlying our ideas of conduct. She has to assimilate, in less than a year, a number of social and ethical facts which were put into you before you were out of your cradle. At one moment she's scolded for telling a lie and at the next for picking her teeth. She has, by the light of her own wisdom, to sort out the relative values of these things. Can you wonder that she finds it hard?"

"It's the same for the other two."

"You are willing to make allowances for them. Besides . . . they are children, and it's no insult to treat them as such."

"You think I'm unfair?"

"I think you are, my dear."

"So does Lewis," she muttered bitterly.

"Ah?"

"He encourages her." Florence flushed and broke out in

a kind of dull anger: "I wouldn't have thought you'd take her part. But she will be that kind of woman; the kind that men always defend. The kind that men call 'a good sort.' Antonia is like that. You're a man and you don't see it."

"I think she has a good disposition . . . "

"You're mistaken! She's not to be trusted. Those girls have bad blood in them, somewhere . . . something corrupt. They've never been innocent. She'll go to the bad as fast as she can, unless she's watched. Sometimes I wonder if already . . . "

"Florence! You are letting yourself get into a state of mind that does you no credit! I couldn't have believed that you could speak so!"

Charles spoke in great anger, though he was wrenched with pity for her, remembering the tolerant, unsuspecting creature that she used to be. She remembered, too; she had a sudden vision of herself going off to the Tyrol to fetch the Sanger children home, of her kindliness, of the thousand delicate scruples which, in those days, hedged and bounded every word she said. She had been so slow to think evil and so free from base imaginings. What had happened to her? Life had become a shipwreck, a desperate, snatching, devil-take-the-hindermost affair. She began to think that she would leave this house, even if Lewis changed his mind about going abroad. It was an unlucky place. It had witnessed too much of the wreckage, the gradual disintegration of her old, civilized self, and the emergence of the untutored creature who talked as she had just been talking.

"Perhaps I'm unfair," she admitted. "I'll try to do better. Really, I will. But it angers me, the thoughtless way that you and Lewis egg her on."

"Lewis is very fond of her, I think."

"He is. He's fond of all the children."

"I know. I really think he is worried, when you threaten her with school. He is afraid she will not be happy. You should respect his feelings, my dear, if I may venture to say so. He is not, I imagine, a man who feels affection easily."

But there he went too far. She replied coldly that she quite understood Lewis and his feelings. Charles hastily agreed; he was diffident and afraid of going too far; he did not think that he was justified in saying much more. But before they parted he had induced her to reconsider her sentence of school at Harrogate.

Meanwhile Teresa was busy in the drawing room with her examination paper, and Lewis found her there, an hour later, sobbing distractedly over her sums.

"Oh, Lewis," she wailed, "do come and help me! I've done this sum about papering the room nine times, and . . ."

"Why on earth do you do it at all?"

"The answer comes out that it would take five million yards of paper to paper a room under twenty foot square, with a lot of windows! Well, that must be wrong, because rooms that size don't . . ."

"Let me look at it! Nothing would induce me to go to a school if I didn't want to. It's your own fault. My dear child! You've papered this room absolutely solid! You must find the surface space of the walls, not the cubic contents of the room. You'll run away, I suppose, as soon as she sends you?"

"Where could I run? I've nowhere. Look at this literature paper! And this: 'Say what you know about the retreat from Moscow.' Do you know anything? I don't. Could it be anything to do with that Empress Catherine, do you think, in Sanger's opera? It had some things about Moscow."

"I know some poetry about her," said Lewis hopefully.

"It begins: 'In Catherine's reign, whom glory still adores, the greatest . . .'"

"Poetry is no use to me. There's a bit here quoted and I have to say who wrote it. It says: 'God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.' That seems a damn silly sort of a piece, doesn't it?"

Lewis agreed, with unnecessary violence.

"Though, mind you, some poetry is all right. Do you know a piece called 'Elegy, Written in a Country Churchyard'? It's lovely! I learnt it at Cleeve. It says:

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires,  
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires!"

She thought these lines so moving that her voice became quite tearful as she recited them. But Lewis was not listening. He had picked up from the table a penny exercise-book and saw that it was full of unformed writing. He had just read:

Our early occupation exhausted us so much that we did nothing else remarkable this day of which there is nothing to report save that Sanger threw a bottle at Linda, thinking that it was empty. But it had Green Chartreuse in it and for this misfortune we are all smarting. We took some breakfast on a tray to our dear and beloved Lewis, who keeps late hours both ways. But he, lying in bed, said take it away, I don't want any, I have a little headache, rejecting us with many oaths, so that it took our most endearing persuasions to induce him to swallow. But in a little while he

became more pleasant in his conversation, and I must confess that never, not even in his very worst moments, do we find him entirely disagreeable. We love him too well.

"What's this?" he asked, turning the pages.

She snatched it from him, crying:

"You mustn't look at that! It's my diary."

"Let me, Tessa! I was reading something about myself. Am I often mentioned?"

"Sometimes." She grew very pink. "Let's get on with these sums!"

The next sum was about trains crossing each other on a bridge. At the sight of it she collapsed into tears again.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do? What shall I do? I can't! I cannot bear it!"

"Come with me!" The words broke from him before he knew that he had thought them. "Dearest, dearest Tessa! My dear love! Don't cry! Don't let them make you cry! Come with me!"

"Come with you? Where?"

"Anywhere! When I go, after the concert."

"Florence would never allow it."

"No," he said, more collectedly. "You'd have to do it without asking her."

"You mean . . . really . . . that we should run away?"

Yes. He discovered that he did mean that.

"Well," she said, after a pause; "there are points in it. It's better than being like the cat in the adage."

"The . . . ?"

"Don't ask me what an adage is, for I don't know. But it's better than making—I dare not wait upon 'I would'."

"I don't follow you. It's better than going to school."

"It's very good of you to be so concerned about it."



"I don't know that it is so very good of me," he said grimly. "You know very well why I want you to come."

"I'm not sure. Could you let me have it in plain English?"

"In plain English . . . you're too dear to leave behind. I love you; I can't do without you. And if you are going to be so unhappy at school, that settles it."

"Love me? What do you mean by that? There's a song:

"Away, false man, I know thou lov'st,  
I know thou lov'st too many."

"No, Tessa. This is a star part . . . a solo . . ."

"A duet you mean? Looks to me more like a trio. Why did you marry Florence?"

"You know why."

"Yes, I do know. It was unfair to both of us, if you loved me. That's what I'm complaining of."

"I know. But it's done now."

"And you want it undone? Why couldn't you have thought of all this before? You were so mad to get her that you forgot all about me. If you'd waited a bit you could have had me."

"Could I? Then . . . then . . . Oh, Tessa, say it!"

"I loved you. I'd have had you. I promised myself to you . . . ever so long ago . . . When first I ever began to think about love. I thought then that I wouldn't ever have any man but you. I don't think I ever will. But it's too late now."

"No, it isn't. You still love me, don't you?"

"What's that got to do with it? I don't see that I can come now. I'd feel bad about Florence. I'd feel as if you were her belonging. And I'm her cousin, you know; and

I've lived in her house for months and months. She's been very kind to us, though lately she's been a little snappy, and I don't blame her with you going on the way you do. I should feel mean if I ran off with her husband. When first you said that you were going off after the concert, I thought of asking you to take me, but then I saw it wouldn't do. If you were anybody else at all nice, I'd go with you to get away from school. And if it wasn't for Florence, I'd rather go with you than anything in the world. But, as it is, I don't see my way to it. If I did, I shouldn't enjoy myself. The pangs of unappeased remorse would gnaw my vitals."

She looked at her diary as she said this, as if she admired her own language and would have liked to write it down. Lewis remonstrated with her scruples.

"I should have thought it was perfectly obvious that my marriage with Florence has come to an end. We practically agreed as much, the night after 'Prester John.' You heard me say at breakfast that we should probably part; she showed no signs of minding, did she? I expect she's very glad to get rid of me."

This sounded reasonable enough. Marriage, in Teresa's experience, did not last longer than was absolutely convenient to both parties. She had never supposed that the Dodd household was a permanent thing and lately it had showed every sign of going to pieces. Florence had made no protest, at breakfast, when Lewis proclaimed the state of affairs. Charles had accepted the thing quite conversationally. They had, of course, an unreasonable habit of concealing their sentiments; often they would not exhibit their anger. But in a case like this, Teresa calculated, they would surely speak up. She hesitated, and then said:

"I daresay that's so. But it's not my affair. It may be a very good thing that you should go; and if you go I suppose,

you'll have to get another wife. But I don't think she can be me. Everybody would know and they'd say we'd been carrying on in this house behind poor Florence's back. It would be awful for her, especially with the ideas she's got. She'd think I was a traitor. I really couldn't. I don't want to be a viper in anybody's bosom."

"Will you stop talking in that strain?"

"It's a very good strain. At least, it's got good intentions. A person must do what they think right, mustn't they?"

Lewis had nothing to say to this. His case was a little complicated in that he was not quite sure of his own wishes. Certainly he desired her company on his travels; he did not think that he could do very well without her. She was such a darling, and, now that he came to think of it, the only thing that had kept him so long at Strand-on-the-Green. But he wanted also that she should be happy and safe; and he was not absolutely convinced of his own fitness to look after her. She had been evasive when he asked if she still loved him; yet the crucial point of the whole matter lay exactly there. If she was still bound by that simple, uncompromising love of her childhood, to which she had just confessed, then nothing on earth must be allowed to hold them apart. But possibly she had changed. He questioned her, but could get no definite answer, though he saw that her eyes were full of tears. At last he said impatiently:

"Then you love Florence so terribly much that you'll put up with three years of school for her sake?"

"Not three; one," she explained. "Then I'll rebel and I think Uncle Charles will back me. I must—what do you call it—compromise! That's a useful thing to do, Lewis. It shows you've got a well-regulated mind. I don't believe you know how."

"I don't, thank God!"

"Well, I do."

"Then you've changed."

"Perhaps I have. It's not my fault. Nobody can help changing. Things are done to them and they change. If you think of all that's happened since Sanger died and we were brought here! I seem to have had so many new things to think about. You can't forget anything that you've once learnt. You can't go back to being what you were. I wish you could. I'm sorry we came here, any of us; we'd have been better to stay with the sort of people we were accustomed to. But as I am here I'd better see it through. I shall stay and be a lady."

"What's the good of being a lady if you're unhappy?"

"Unhappiness," she said, in the voice of Uncle Charles, "is bound to come to every one of us. I don't think we'd escape it in each other's company, Lewis."

"Nor do I. But I want your company."

"Then want must be your master, for I've said my say."

"There's been plenty of it."

"Well, you want to know such a lot."

"Only one thing, and I don't know it yet."

But she would not tell him. She knew that telling, for her, would be surrender. To say the thing would be so irrevocable that she could not then betray the truth by leaving him. To her, avowal and compliance went together. So she gathered up her papers and her diary and left him still uncertain. He was striding up and down the room, fighting it out with himself, when the face of Charles was poked round the door. It looked blank when it saw Lewis. Charles had stolen up, as soon as Florence was out of the way, to do Teresa's sums for her.

"Tessa?" said Lewis vaguely, in answer to his question. "She . . . she went away . . . I don't know where, I'm afraid."

Charles was just going to withdraw when he thought better of it. He came in and shut the door.

"I want to tell her," he said, "that she needn't stay very long at this school if she really dislikes it."

"She's got nowhere else to go," said Lewis defiantly.

Charles glanced out of the window and said:

"Look at that long line of barges the *Mary Blake's* got! I've an idea that I want Tessa in Cambridge sometime."

"You want her?"

"She can make tea. My housekeeper is a fool and can't. But I couldn't have her just yet. She wants petticoat government for a little longer."

"She might like that," said Lewis thoughtfully.

"You think so? You've known her longer than the rest of us."

"Yes. She . . . she's . . ."

Lewis blinked and sought for words. Charles waited.

"She's different from anybody else," confided Lewis at last.

"I agree."

"School! You know it might spoil her."

"I don't think so."

"Well, if she stays," urged Lewis, "you'll see after her?"

"Stays?"

"Doesn't run off, I mean."

"You mean she might run off if we press her with school? My dear fellow, where could she run to?"

Lewis said nothing.

"She's taken you into her confidence?" suggested Charles.

"Taken! I've always been there."

"Quite so. And you think she will run unless we drop the idea of school?"

"No," said Lewis truthfully. "She says not. She says she'll try it for a year."

"Says not! And you say she will, is that it?"

"Yes," said Lewis absently.

"By all that's wonderful!" thought Charles. "The little creature's had the sense to turn him down. He's asked her and she's turned him down!"

Lewis, who had been conducting so fierce an argument with himself that he scarcely knew that he had been talking to Charles, now said:

"I want her . . . to do the best she can for herself . . . "

"She had better surely remain under the protection of her friends, of the people who love her?" suggested Charles.

Lewis shook his head at this and brought out a final melancholy statement:

"Nobody," he said, "could love her better than I do."

And Charles believed it. In the midst of his exultation he discovered that he was quite sorry for the young man.

## CHAPTER XIX

**A** BOWL?" exclaimed Charles. "What bowl is that?" He had hardly attended to his daughter's conversation until something about a bowl arrested his mind.

"A sort of orange lustre. Very beautiful, isn't it, Lewis?"

"What?" said Lewis, without looking up.

He was reading an old exercise book which seemed utterly to absorb him.

"Tessa's bowl."

"Has Tessa got a bowl?"

It seemed strange to Charles that Teresa should ever own anything so concrete as a bowl. Her very clothes seldom looked as though they really belonged to her.

"She bought a bowl with the birthday money you gave her. You must see it; it's lovely."

"Fancy Tessa buying a bowl! She'll drop it."

"I was surprised that she had the sense to hit on anything so good."

After her recent incredible demonstration of sense, Charles could not be surprised at anything in Teresa. He said that he would like to see the bowl, and Florence, going to the drawing-room door, called for it to be brought. Lewis looked annoyed. He had discovered Teresa's diary lying about, and he did not like to be interrupted until he had made himself acquainted with all its secrets. He was learning all that he wanted to know about the state of her heart. But he knew that if she saw it in his hands she would make a great scene and call public attention to a proceeding which the others might consider a little ungentlemanly. So, when

he heard her coming, he dropped it behind the sofa and joined in the conversation.

"What do you want a bowl for?" he asked mistrustfully.

"He told me to buy a pretty thing, and it was the first I saw that I wanted."

"Admirable!" said Charles, examining it.

"Not at all," stated Lewis. "Tessa doesn't want a bowl. She oughtn't to want one."

"Why on earth not?" Florence was indignant. "It's really an exquisite thing."

"She has no house," explained Lewis, taking the bowl and balancing it on one hand. "People with no houses ought to know when they are well off."

"Take care! You'll break it!"

"Bowls lead to houses. Houses are mainly to keep bowls in. If Tessa had a house she could buy as many bowls as she liked. She'd be done for. As it is, she should beware. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*. Oh! There, Tessa! I've broken your pretty thing!"

Charles could never quite make up his mind if it was an accident; but the lovely, brittle treasure lay in shivers on the floor.

"Lewis, you wretch!" cried Florence. "Never mind, Tessa dear! We'll get you another."

"I'm a lady," said Teresa primly. "So I won't say what I think of him."

Lewis went on to his knees at her feet and began to collect the little bits. Florence told him that he might, at least, say that he was sorry.

"What shall I say?" he asked, looking up at Teresa. "Shall I say that my peace of mind is shattered for ever?"

"My bowl wasn't all that valuable, I'm afraid."

"It was rather valuable," Florence reminded her.



"No bowl," she stated loftily, "is worth the peace of mind of the lowest and the least, much less our ray of sunshine."

She got, in return for this, a look from Lewis which silenced her. She turned away and said:

"We must find a little coffin to put the remains in."

Florence caught sight of her face and mistook the blanched sorrow in it. She offered consolation:

"I'm sure we can replace it, my dear; can't we, Father?"

Charles produced a five-pound note.

"Here you are, hussy! The next pretty thing you buy give to me to keep. He's not to be trusted with them."

"He's too clever," she said darkly. "That's what's the matter with him."

"Are you coming to Chiswick Park station to see me off?"

He was on the point of departure, after a very uneasy weekend, and he was anxious, if possible, to get a few words alone with her, that he might strengthen her resolution and temper her dread of school with promises of an early release. Florence had pleased him greatly by her obvious efforts to be more just; the household, as a whole, had a tranquil air and he thought that things might do very well provided that Teresa stayed the course. In any case, he had said as much as he dared to all of them.

"I'd like to see you off," said Teresa, with a tentative glance at Florence, for she was not quite sure if she would be wanted.

"She can't come," explained Charles. "She has to go to Richmond. So nobody will see me off if you don't."

"I'll come, too, and carry your suitcase," offered Lewis.

Florence looked pleased at his civility, but a little surprised, for he did not often offer to carry guests' luggage.

"Sebastian will come, too, and carry Uncle Charles's walking-stick," said Teresa, who did not want to walk home alone with Lewis if she could help it.

"Not I," said Sebastian, who was reading a score in a corner of the room. "I'm busy."

"Odd's boddikins!" exclaimed Teresa. "Don't you want to say good-bye to your uncle?"

This oath was secret signal among the Sangers and meant a demand for help. They had found it useful during their life in England. Sebastian immediately pricked up his ears and loyally said that perhaps he would come to the station after all. Paulina, attentive to the password, asked Teresa if she should not also want to see her uncle off.

"No, I don't think so," said Teresa, who feared that, if four of them went, they might walk home in couples.

As it was, they went in couples: Charles and Teresa in front and Lewis behind with Sebastian and the suitcase. On the way Charles said what he could to his niece, and painted her future in the most amazingly attractive colours, if only she would be patient and go to school for a little time. She answered very sensibly and seemed disposed to do right as far as she was able. He believed that the worst struggle was already over for her, and he left her at Chiswick Park station in a fairly comfortable frame of mind.

He was no more ready to credit a young person with sense than are most men at his time of life; but when he did so, it was with an almost over-lavish generosity. Himself full of the garnered wisdom of years he was inclined to confuse Teresa's intuitive sagacity with that other more reliable article which can only be the fruit of experience. This was a mistake which he could not have made had she been a young man, for he knew all about young men. His experience of girls had been, on the whole, very small and his chief impression of them was that they were quite unlike boys, creatures of a weak, irrational temper, but without any great intensity of feeling. The women he had known best had been unreasonable rather than passionate. So that

having made certain that Teresa was upon the right course, he was not disposed to doubt her fortitude in pursuing it. Besides, he had observed the skill with which she had avoided another interview with Lewis. She was quite competent to manage the affair in her own way.

Lewis, however, had been reading her diary and had made up his mind. He was a little staggered by the history of faithful, ungrudging devotion which had been thus revealed to him. It seemed as though a final separation was not any more to be thought of; as though all the love he could give was but a poor return for hers. He wanted to tell her about it, and he said, as the train with Charles in it rattled out of the station:

"I'm not sure that I want Sebastian just now."

"Well, I do," said Teresa. "His opinion is always sound."

She explained that she had taken Paulina and Sebastian into her confidence. Paulina had advised her to go with Lewis, but Sebastian was very much against it.

"Most officious of him," complained Lewis.

"I don't understand what you're after," said Sebastian.

"Do you want her for your wife?"

"Yes," said Lewis.

It was exactly what he did want. It seemed to him that Tessa was all that a wife should be: tender, loyal, his other self, the only creature in the world to whom he would turn for prudent counsels.

"But that's just exactly what she can't be," Sebastian pointed out. "You've got a wife already. She'll be your . . ."

"Hold your tongue, Sebastian. And you, Tessa, mind the traffic!"

The question was suspended until they had got themselves across Chiswick High Road. Then Sebastian began again:

"But what will she be?"

Lewis threw a glance of rather shamefaced appeal at Teresa, who suggested that, as she was not coming, it was of no consequence.

"Well, I don't approve at all," said the boy firmly. "It wouldn't be suitable for you, now that you're almost a lady really. Why can't he get somebody like Linda."

"I would suit him better than Florence does," mentioned Teresa, as though anxious to be fair to both sides.

"Well . . . could anybody suit him worse?"

"I know him so well."

"All the more reason for knowing there's no sense in it."

"Of course, I never could make out what she saw in him."

"I daresay she thought he would improve."

"Improvement wouldn't hurt him."

Lewis did not like this. They talked across him as if he was not there. The interview was not turning out according to plan, but what could he say, in front of Sebastian?

"I wish," he said, "that you wouldn't talk about me as if I was some awful fate that either you or Florence had to endure."

"Well, so you are," retorted Sebastian. "I heard Ike say once that he always pitied Sanger's women, but that he was a great deal sorrier for yours."

"You see, Lewis, you don't always know your own mind," complained Teresa. "Sanger at least knew that."

They had an unsatisfactory walk. Teresa and Sebastian teased Lewis all the way until they got to Kew Bridge; but this baffling strategy only made him all the more obstinately determined, and quenched his last scruples. At last, when they were leaning on Kew Bridge watching the tide, he succeeded in taking her by surprise.

"Well, then," he flung at her, "go to your school! But I happen to know that you consider it a damnable chanel house, and that you would rather fling yourself into the smoky abyss of Etna if it were handy."

She recognized the quotation and grew livid with fury.

"Of course . . . if you've been reading my diary . . . "

"You shouldn't leave it about."

"I know it was foolish of me. One doesn't expect, in Florence's house, to have people like you wandering around . . . "

She abused him for several minutes without ever repeating herself.

"All this Billingsgate," he said, "only tells me one thing."

"And anyhow the bit about the charnel house was poetic licence. I wrote it to relieve my feelings."

"Oh! Is all your diary poetic licence?"

"Most of it."

"Still . . . making allowances for that . . . I'm sure now . . . "

"If you'd had eyes in your head you could have been sure before, without going and reading my private diary."

"Still I was modest. I didn't like to be sure."

"What weren't you sure of?" asked Sebastian, puzzled.

Lewis and Teresa were silent; he wanted to hear her say it, and she was afraid. Sebastian looked from one to the other, and exclaimed in immense surprise:

"Do you love him, Tessa?"

"He thinks so," she said rather sternly.

Lewis looked embarrassed, as though he had been accused of a fearful indiscretion. He had nothing to say for himself. The long silence which followed was broken by Sebastian, who said that he thought he should like to go to Camden Town. He considered that the conversation had taken a difficult turn, impossible for three people to sustain, and an omnibus for Camden Town was just coming across the bridge. Teresa, deciding that flight was the only remedy for her situation, exclaimed that she would come, too.

"You've no money," said the prudent Sebastian. "And I've only enough for myself."

"I've a five-pound note."

"He'll give you the change all in halfpence."

"Well, Lewis must have some. Here, Lewis! Lend me half a crown!"

Lewis, dazed, produced a handful of silver. She snatched a coin and jumped up on the 'bus which had stopped beside them.

"Wait a minute," cried Lewis. "I haven't finished."

"I have."

She was whirled away from him. Lewis stood on the curb gaping after the 'bus and saw her climbing up to the top, her long plaits slapping her back and her little brother at her heels. Away under the bright April sky she went, past the houses and the busy shops, down to Hammersmith Broadway.

At last he pulled himself together and started back to Strand-on-the-Green. But before he got home he changed his mind. He would endure no more of her mockery; she must not be allowed to return from Camden Town and find him ignominiously there. He would go away; without a word he would disappear, and she could see how she liked it. In any case he hated the place and would live there no longer. So he returned to Chiswick Park and took the train for town. Strand-on-the-Green saw nothing of him for a week, and Florence went about the house looking as if the world had come to an end.

As for Teresa, she jolted along on the top of her 'bus and was at first very unhappy. It had been hard to leave Lewis so; but it had, at least, been final. She cried a little into a clean handkerchief, which she unexpectedly found in her coat pocket. Sebastian looked at her with compassion but said nothing until they were past Turnham Green Church. Then he asked:

"But are you really going to this school?"

"I suppose so. I don't care what I do."

"I expect you'll learn a lot there," he said.

"I don't feel as if I'd much more to learn. There's nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon."

"That's nonsense," quoth he.

"I daresay. But it's how I feel."

"Uncle Robert," said Sebastian, after a long pause, "says that the young can't know what real sorrow is."

"Does he? Silly old donkey! Look, Sebastian! What's that funny place?"

"That's Olympia, where they have the Military Tournament that Ike was telling us about."

"Oh, I should like to see it! Do you think we could get Ike to take us before we go to school?"

"We might ask him. I can't see what you want to call Uncle Robert a silly old donkey for, Tessa. He may be right. We can't know. We haven't been old yet. When you are grown up you may have worse times than you've had already."

"Oh, no," said Teresa decidedly, craning to get a last look at Olympia, which she thought an admirable building. "I'm sure I never shall."

In this her wisdom had instructed her, for she never did.





BOOK IV  
THREE MEET



## CHAPTER XX

IT WAS nearly a week before Florence could bring herself to go in search of Lewis. To begin with, she would not admit that there was anything strange in his absence. He had wild ways. He would come back. She resolutely banished from her mind the tormenting suspicion that he had deserted her. It was bad enough, it was horrible, to know that such a thing should so easily seem possible; it could not really happen.

When, after three days, her fears became more clamorous and insistent, she clung desperately to her dignity. She had said of Evelyn Churchill that it was degrading for a wife to pursue her husband. She would do nothing. She would take no notice. But she wandered about the house with a feverish, mechanical energy and a look as though she were always listening for something.

She had plenty to do, for Paulina was to be despatched to Paris, with a suitable outfit, at very short notice. A convenient escort having turned up, the child was being got ready in a hurry. There was no peace for anybody until the morning when, howling loudly, she was handed over to her disconcerted travelling companions at Victoria.

Florence had refused to take Teresa and Sebastian upon this final expedition, fearing a scene upon the platform. They were very sulky about it and she was not surprised to hear, when she got home, that they had run off somewhere. Roberto thought they must have gone up to town, because Teresa had on her best hat.

"Oh, well," sighed Florence, "it doesn't signify. They'll come back, I suppose."

It was too much to hope that they had gone for good, but she was glad to get them out of the house for a little while. They were a trial, poor children, though she had come lately to better terms with Teresa, who was more civil and tractable in consequence of a sort of promise that she should not go to school before the autumn.

There was a pile of letters for Lewis in the hall; some of them looked quite important. It was most inconvenient not knowing where to send them. They could, of course, go down to the hall where he would hold his Sunday rehearsal; Florence thought that she might send, with them, a courteous note, apologizing for the delay in forwarding and suggesting that he should give her an address. That would not look too much like pursuit; it was the merest common sense. At present the ridiculous pile, which grew larger every day, advertised to everybody in the house her ignorance of his whereabouts. To Millicent, who called that afternoon, she felt compelled to offer an explanation:

"Look! Isn't it stupid of Lewis? He's gone off and forgotten to leave me an address. What on earth am I to do with these? Unless he writes or comes I can't get hold of him before the Sunday rehearsal."

"Gone off?" said Millicent blankly. "Where?"

"That's what I'd like to know," complained Florence, with a laugh which she hoped was convincing. "He went off on Saturday, while I was out. He's the vaguest creature. I rather think he may have gone into the country. He does, sometimes, when he's working, you know . . ."

"But my husband saw him last night . . ." began Millicent, and broke off, gaping excitedly.

"Saw him? Where did he see him?"

Millicent looked her over for a second and then said:

"Having supper at the Savoy. Doesn't look as if he was out of town, does it?"

"N—no. Only it's funny he doesn't write or telephone about his letters."

"Very funny."

"Was he alone, do you know?"

"Oh, no. Jewish-looking people, Hope said they were. At least, the men were Jewish-looking . . ."

"Oh, yes. He knows a lot of Jews," said Florence at once. "Come out and sit in the garden. It's quite warm."

She felt that she might conceal her unhappiness better in the garden. She had been so wretched lately that she could almost believe that anxiety and depression were stamped all over the walls of her charming house, like the damp coming through. This prying young woman would be sure to smell it out. They went into the garden and sat under the mulberry tree and she tried to reestablish the pose of the serenely confident wife.

She had come lately to feel that Lewis was not entirely to blame for his attitude towards his sister. Millicent could be very disagreeable sometimes. This afternoon she was unbearable. Nothing would interest her. She sat playing with her pearls and staring in front of her with a little smile, while Florence ploughed on through politics and the arts and even descended to social small talk in order to avoid family discussion. At last, after a prolonged silence, she said:

"I hope you put it across Lewis for the way he behaved over that Sanger opera. You don't mind my being frank, do you? He ought to be made to understand that he can't behave like that. The whole of London is talking about it."

"Oh, are they?" thought Florence viciously. "You mean that you are talking about it to the whole town."

Aloud she said that Lewis was apt to display his opinions a little too frankly.

"A little! You should hear the Leyburns! Of course, rudeness sometimes pays. But it should be discriminating rudeness, not to the wrong people. He's so wholesale. He always was. When he was seven weeks old, he was sick all over his rich godfather. That's been his line ever since."

And Florence learnt that the Leyburns were never going to ask him to their house again; that a set was being made against the performance of the Symphony in Three Keys; that even old Sir Bartlemy said that half an hour was the utmost that he could stand of young Dodd at a time. All this was said in a tone of superficial raillery very difficult to answer; Millicent was careful not to pass the limits permissible to a plain-spoken sister. It was not until she touched upon non-professional scandals that Florence was able to protest.

"You know," she said, "he shouldn't go about with these awful Jews. Or with the awful ladies that the awful Jews go about with. It gives a wrong impression. Of course, one knows why he hesitates to introduce his friends to you, in fact, you simply couldn't meet some of them, but it all gives a sort of confirmation to the ridiculous things people say. There again, I'm bound to say . . ."

"Why are you bound to say?"

"Oh, I always say what I think. But if you won't hear the truth . . ."

"I won't hear idle gossip."

"Gossip! My dear! I wouldn't dream of repeating gossip to you. I know you are so much above these things. Believe me, I don't tell you half I hear. Not a quarter! Still, we'll drop the subject, if you find it painful. I see in the paper, by the way, that little Mrs. Birnbaum's baby has arrived."

"Oh, has it? I missed that. When was it? Sunday? And I ought to have enquired. I must ring them up."

"Married a year now . . . isn't she?"

"Very nearly," calculated Florence.

"Hm! Rather stupid of people to say that the child is none of Birnbaum's, don't you think? Because I think you told me that they are rather a devoted couple."

"Do they say that?" cried Florence indignantly. "It's the most cruel, scandalous nonsense. Wicked! She's my cousin, you know; one of the Sanger children."

"I know. That's it. People have got hold of the name. He's such a legend nowadays. Nobody can believe that a daughter of his can be quite . . . The general idea is that he kept a sort of harem at that Austrian place. And you know, the rumours about that Birnbaum set . . . well! . . . they have to be heard to be believed. Not that I mean that quite, do I?"

"I don't know what you mean. I can't believe there's much amiss with Antonia. She was a wild little person before she married, but she has quite settled down."

"Of course! You went out there with your uncle, didn't you? And you found no harem, I take it?"

"N—no," said Florence, and then firmly: "Oh, no."

"Ridiculous what people will say, isn't it? And you married your little cousin off at once to Birnbaum, didn't you? Did you find him there already, or where did he spring from? And of course you met Lewis there, too. I'm sure we ought to be very thankful it was you Lewis married and not the cousin. I don't know that we'd have welcomed Sanger's circus into the family with the *empressement* which we showed to you, my dear!"

Florence was too angry to answer, and Millicent presently asked if she had seen the baby.

"I shall tell everyone that you have," she said, "and that it's as like Birnbaum as possible. We must uphold the family reputation. By the way, have you got rid of the other girl yet? The plain one."

"Teresa?"

"Yes, Teresa. What have you done with her? She hasn't gone to Paris with the little one, has she?"

"I don't know what will be done with her. She's delicate: I doubt if she ought to go to school. She has queer faints . . ."

"That's a pity. I should send her and take the risk, if I were you. What is it? Heart? They take very good care of them at these schools."

And as Millicent pulled on her gloves, she observed thoughtfully:

"She wouldn't be as easy to find a husband for as the pretty little Birnbaum. Well! I must be off. So nice to have seen you, my dear!"

She got up and Florence followed her through the house, explaining how childish Teresa was for her years, how undeveloped.

"Nearly sixteen, isn't she?" said Millicent, pausing on the doorstep. "I shouldn't wonder if she knew a thing or two, in spite of all you say, Florence. Good-bye! Next time you lose Lewis, I should advertise. You know . . . the agony column . . . 'Come back! All forgiven and forgotten!' Or you might try the Birnbaums, mightn't you?"

And she was gone, walking lightly down the river path, while Florence, gazing after her, reflected upon the squalid complexion which Sanger affairs took on in retrospect. The Karindehütte, after London gossip had been busy with it, really sounded no better than a . . . than what Linda had called it.

She turned into the house and looked again at the letters, and decided that really she had better try the Birnbaums. Not that there was the smallest atom of truth in Millicent's odious suggestions; but if he was dining with Jewish-looking



people, it was very possible that Jacob might be able to trace him. She would go and take some flowers to Tony and sit with her a bit; that was no more than an obvious duty. And she would just mention that she had no address for forwarding letters, and Tony would tell Jacob and Jacob would tell Lewis and Lewis would write perhaps.

She set off for Lexham Gardens with a large bunch of iris; but Antonia's room seemed to be so full of flowers already that there was hardly space for more. It was a peculiar room, eloquent of luxury and wealth, and yet dirty and untidy, with the kind of sluttish disorder in which the Sangers felt most at home. Even the monthly nurse had not succeeded in making it look like a sick room. There was a piano in it, and several decanters and a mixer stood among the medicine bottles on the chimney piece, while cigar ash was spilt about everywhere.

Antonia, looking very well and incredibly beautiful, lay in an enormous bed, her satin counterpane perfectly strewn with the books, fruit, sweets, cigarettes, and gewgaws which Jacob bought for her every time he went out of the house. She exclaimed joyfully when she saw Florence:

"Oh, my dear! Why didn't you come before? Have you seen my funny baby?"

"Dear Tony! How are you feeling . . . "

"Have you seen my little boy? Oh, he's ugly! Ho there! Rachel! Bring in the *Bübchen*!"

"Vait a little," responded a guttural voice from an inner room. "In tree minute I bring him . . . "

"Oh, Florence, I've been longing to show him to you. He's the ugliest thing you ever saw. Ike says he doesn't think he can be mine, he's so ugly. I think he's uncommonly like his dad, but I'm too nice to say so. Push those horrid garments off that chair and sit down."

"My dear! How are you?"

"Oh, I'm quite all right. Never felt better. But I felt very queer on Sunday. You know, I never expected it would go on so long; I began to feel very funny just after breakfast, and of course I thought the *Bübchen* would turn up then and there. And old Rachel hadn't come because she wasn't fixed to come till Monday. And Ike was out. And, you know, I'm so shy of all the servants in this house, they're so grand. I didn't like to tell them what was the matter with me. And there was nobody I could tell but Lewis."

"Lewis!"

"Yes, he was still in bed because he had a headache, because they'd been out late the night before. And I went wandering round the house in the most awful state of mind. And then I felt rather better, and I wondered if it would do me any good if I went out and took a ride on a 'bus. And then I felt funny again; really awful! And I got so desperate, thinking that my baby would be born before Ike or anybody came to help me, that I went up and woke Lewis. Oh, and he was so nice! You can't think how kind he was! He got up at once and dressed in two seconds and sent off one of the maids running for Rachel, and another for Ike, and another for the doctor, because we didn't know any of their numbers, because Ike threw the directory out of the window at a cat two nights before. And then he went down and made me a cup of tea. Wasn't it clever of him? And he told me funny stories about how Ike once tried hiring a Chinese cook. Oh, he can be kind, when he likes! I was a bit frightened, but I couldn't help laughing. And then Ike and Rachel and all the servants came tearing in. And the thing didn't finish till late in the evening; I was ever so much worse later on, only luckily I didn't know I was going to be. And Lewis and Ike sat with me a long time to cheer me up, and sang bits out of 'Otello.' And Rachel sang, too. She's got a nice voice, though she is a monthly nurse. She's Jacob's

first cousin, you know. He has some very funny cousins. Her brother keeps a pawnshop in the Old Kent Road, but he's quite rich."

They were interrupted by the entrance of Rachel with Antonia's baby. She was a frowsy elderly Jewess, who looked as if she had got into a nurse's uniform by mistake. But she was, none the less, at the top of her profession, and Jacob had known what he was about when he secured her services.

"Look at him, Florence," crowed the little mother. "Isn't he a horror?"

He was certainly a plain child and so ridiculously like Birnbaum that Florence wanted to laugh. She prodded him gently, with a grudging, awkward tenderness. In the abstract she did not like babies until they were old enough to crawl and prattle and be amusing. Very young ones she found a little monotonous. Of course, she wanted one herself, but that was a different matter.

"He's got a lot of hair," she said.

"Yes. . . But Rachel says it will all come off," said Tony sadly. "He'll be worse still when he's bald."

And she pressed him to her heart and kissed the top of his threatened head and whispered some inaudible, loving remark into his ear. Plainly she thought him the world's wonder. Something in her face stung Florence almost unbearably; she could not watch it. She got up and wandered about the room, looking at the Gainsboroughs that Jacob's friend had collected. Presently she asked:

"But is Lewis staying here?"

"Lewis?" said Antonia. "Oh, yes. Didn't you know?"

"My dear Tony! Lewis is a most trying man. He walked out of the house last week and forgot to leave an address. I've been left without the slightest idea where he could be."

"Florence!" Antonia opened her eyes very wide. "You

didn't know? But when Tessa and Sebastian came here this morning, surely . . . "

"Did they come?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't you know? They've gone out now with Lewis and Ike to Stavgröd's recital. They'll be back any minute."

"I'm sorry they came. I'd no idea of it. I hope they didn't tire you."

"That's quite all right. I see stacks of people, don't I, Rachel? I had a dinner party here last night. But how like Lewis to forget to tell you he was here! Surely Tessa and Sebastian knew, didn't they?"

Florence could not tell her. Privately she believed that they did and that the whole Sanger family was plotting against her behind her back. But in truth they had known nothing of it. Their visit to Lexham Gardens had been pure impulse and nobody could have been more surprised to find Lewis there than was Teresa, who wished genuinely to keep out of his way.

Florence made an attempt to retreat before the return of the concert party; she felt as though she could hardly trust her temper. But she could not get away in time. A joyous hubbub was heard in the hall while she was bidding Antonia good-bye, and in they all burst in the most remarkable spirits. Jacob came first, vainglorious, swelling with pride over his lovely wife and ugly son, flinging down a fresh armful of gifts upon the already loaded bed, kissing Tony, kissing the baby, kissing his cousin Rachel, almost kissing Florence when he discovered that she was there. Behind him came Lewis, Teresa, Sebastian, Nils Stavgröd, and some odd friends with raucous voices and jocular manners. Florence was quite bewildered by all the noise and laughter, and began to be concerned about Antonia. But she need not have troubled. Tony was more than equal to it. She pulled a shawl a little

way across her white breast and her baby, shook hands with everybody, and called on Jacob to furnish them with cocktails. To Lewis she said severely:

"Why didn't you tell your poor wife that you were coming to us? She didn't know where you were."

Lewis explained that he had left home to get away from his wife. He had shot one look at Florence as he came in, a gleaming, baleful, sullen look, and now he seemed determined to ignore her. She said composedly:

"I only wanted to forward his bills. There are a good many waiting for him. Come, children! I think we'd better go. Antonia oughtn't, I'm sure, to have such a crowd in the room."

"That is no matter!" cried Jacob. "She adores company, do you not, my angel?"

"I do not forbid it," put in Rachel. "A little barty is cheerful, *nicht wahr?*"

So Florence stayed because she saw that she could not get her family away. But she sat a little apart from their circle and succeeded in looking as if she did not belong to them. With an increasing disgust she listened to their conversation. Tony jested with the men, while old Rachel, with hoarse chuckles, supplied occasional anecdotes which always smacked of her calling. Even in the impudent, childish remarks thrown in by Teresa and Sebastian, there was the same complete want of decorum. There was, lavishly displayed, the serene, enthralling beauty of Antonia's motherhood; it was the only good thing in the room. But no one seemed to have any reverence for it; their language profaned it. Florence marvelled that she should ever have found their speech naïve and amusing; nowadays it nauseated her. And there was Tony giving Stavgröd a detailed account of her confinement, apparently in explanation of her absence from his concert! They were all loud in their regret that she had

not been there. Stavgröd had played the Kreutzer Sonata quite well. According to Lewis he would never play it better.

"Oh, dear! And shall I never hear it?"

Antonia turned her enchanting wild eyes upon the fair-haired young man, who instantly became pale with admiration.

"I shall be most happy . . . " he muttered. "Any time . . . now . . . if Madame is not fatigued . . . "

Madame rewarded him with another of her disturbing smiles and Jacob opened the piano. Lewis and Sebastian wrangled a little over which of them was to play, but Lewis prevailed because he said firmly that he knew this piece.

It was surprising music; Florence, for a time, could not help listening in spite of her troubles. But it was Lewis rather than Stavgröd who claimed her attention. He did not often play the piano and she had never heard a performance like this from him before. He certainly knew the piece. There were peculiar passion and sadness in it which plucked at her very heart strings, as though she was herself an instrument for his cruel, clever fingers. And he gave her besides a conviction of restrained power; she felt that he had mastered all emotion and turned it to his own ends. It was outrageous that he could do it. She knew him to be hard, lustful, and unstable; he had no business to command so much effortless beauty. Playing like this required noble thoughts and unflinching aims. But then, this was his real life.

And it was so with all of them. She watched them as they listened; even old Rachel, gross and ugly though she was, had a strange light on her face as she leant against the door, smiling and watching the violinist. Teresa and Sebastian were fixed and intent. Jacob had forgotten wife and child, had turned away from them and was staring through the room, all dim with smoke, as though he could see some lost

vision beyond the window among the dark trees of the garden. And Tony, though she pressed her baby in her arms, had wandered in her mind elsewhere. Her lovely eyes had an inward brooding look. Music, with all these people, came first; that was why they talked about it as if nobody else had any right to it. Once Florence had liked them all too well; now that she understood them better she was frightened of them. She wanted to challenge them, to make a demonstration of her power, to call them back to that world of necessity and compromise which they so sublimely ignored, but with which they would have ultimately to reckon. After all, she was the strongest. She had order and power on her side. They were nothing but a pack of rebels. But she must do something immediate that would prove her strength over them. When the music was finished she rose to her feet, and it was as if they had all grasped something of her emotion. They were silent and watched her curiously as she made her farewells to Antonia. Only Lewis, on the piano-stool, kept his back turned to her and went on strumming softly. But she knew that he was listening.

"Good-bye, Tony," she said. "I'll bring Teresa round to see you again before she goes. She's our next departure, you know. She's going to school at Harrogate the day after Lewis's concert."

This was the earliest day that Teresa could possibly go. Florence finished buttoning up her gloves while her bomb took effect. Teresa turned very pale but made no protest. Lewis stopped playing, swung round on the piano-stool, and asked his wife:

"Is she really going so soon?"

His look disturbed her, but she managed to reply firmly

"As soon as I can get her off."

"When did you settle it?" he asked very low.

"Just now," she answered, meeting his glance.

"She always speaks the truth," he said, turning to Teresa with a grin.

He got up and came into the hall with them. He took down his hat and Florence asked in surprise if he meant to come back to Chiswick.

"To the Silver Sty," he said. "Yes. I've no time to lose."

They went down the steps, out of the heat and haze of the smoky, untidy room into the sharp spring evening. Florence said in an undertone:

"You don't think that by coming back you can alter my plans for Tessa? I warn you, it's no use."

"Tessa!" He smiled a little and glanced over his shoulder at Teresa, who was dragging along listlessly behind them with her young brother. "Oh, it's all up with her now, isn't it, Tessa?"

"What?" she asked blankly.

"It's all up with you now, isn't it?"

She said nothing. She shook her head in a kind of dumb fright, looking at the pair of them as if she would ask how much more she would have to endure at their hands. She felt rather sleepy and yawny, walking along after them, and paid very little attention to where she was going. At a crossing she narrowly escaped death beneath the wheels of a taxi. Instantly the stored exasperation of her elders was poured out upon her. She walked between them, blinking mildly at their furious, frightened rebukes.

"Why can't you look where you are going?" stormed Florence.

"There are prettier ways of committing suicide," Lewis told her.

"It's pure carelessness."

"You seem to know nothing at all about self-preservation."

"A child of five should have more sense!"

"And so inconsiderate! Spoiling our pleasant walk!"



## CHAPTER XXI

THE young Sangers could never quite accustom themselves to the immense importance attached to concerts at Strand-on-the-Green. This was because they had, as yet, hardly learnt the difference between private and public life; the transitions between the two had been, in the old days, much less abrupt. They had been used to live, as it were, without reticences, transferring themselves noisily from the racket of their home to the racket of the Opera House without an appreciable change of atmosphere. There had been none of these secret toilets and preparations, these studied issuings forth into the larger world.

Their cousin, on the other hand, possessed a special concert-room demeanour—a still, serious, attentive carriage which sometimes, on special occasions, showed itself quite early in the day, as though she were practising inwardly. Traces of it were apparent for a whole week before the performance of the Dodd Symphony, which was, of course, the most important thing that had ever happened. An extreme solemnity hung over the actual day, a suspense which damped even the hardened flippancy of Teresa and Sebastian; they went off of their own accord, at an early hour in the evening, to wash their faces and put on their best clothes, a business to which they generally required to be driven.

Florence had told Teresa to put on her new white frock. It was a maidenly garment of embroidered muslin with sleeves to cover her sharp elbows and a high yoke which hid the hollows in her young neck. A white ribbon spanned the broad middle of the dress in that region where it was to be

hoped she might some day have a waist, and other white bows tied up her tail of fair hair. Also she had new patent-leather shoes, with steel buckles, and thick, black silk stockings. All this gear was designed for school parties and concerts, and became her almost as little as it would have become that Delphic Sibyl whom she so closely resembled. Its infantile scantiness emphasized everything that was out of scale in her person: the lanky awkwardness of her rapid growth, and the shy, abrupt grandeur of some of her gestures. She peered at the glass rather dismally and could not help feeling that she looked foolish.

"God in His wisdom gave you that face," she informed her reflection, "and Florence in her wisdom gave you that dress. But they don't understand the value of team work. And neither of them consulted your feelings very much. It's not your beauty, my girl, that will get you into trouble in this world."

She had reached a pitch of wretchedness when all evils looked very much alike. Her detestable clothes, the forlorn certainty of school before her, the effort of decision behind her, the loss of her home, the separation from the people she loved and understood, the reverberation of that terror and bewildered shock which had haunted her ever since the night of Sanger's death, all these oppressed her with an equal weight. To thrust her love out of her heart and life had been so monstrous, so unnatural an effort, that all vital feelings had gone with it. The impulse of protest had died; she had no wishes left and felt, with an odd, surprised relief, that it would be quite easy in future to do what she was told and go where she was bidden. Desiring nothing, she was afraid of nothing save the bodily pain which so often assailed her. To endure this without complaint was now her chief care, for, though its onslaughts were appalling to her mind, she could not bear to think that anybody should know. Illness

of any kind was, in her eyes, a little shameful; in Sanger's circus it had never been tolerated, and Kate was the only person there who sympathized with aches and pains. This illness especially, this unsparing enemy that took such complete possession of her, that conquered her spirit and turned her into nothing but a tortured body, seemed base to Teresa, as though there was something indecent in the ugliness of such a contest. She tried never to think of it, but she could not help being rather frightened when she thought of school where she would be running about all day. Really nowadays, when she had to run, she felt almost ready to die.

Two buttons at the back of her dress proved to be beyond her management, and she did not like holding her arms up, so she went downstairs to demand aid. In her cousin's room she found Lewis with all his red hair standing on end, submitting to a toilet. He was to leave the house before the rest of them, but it seemed likely that he would not be despatched in time. He had been got into his boiled shirt and was standing, palpitating but patient, while his wife dealt with his tie. Both were looking distraught but on better terms than they had been for months. The excitement of the moment was such that they had no time to think of their grievances.

In moments of animation Florence always appeared to advantage. Her fine silver dress, with a brilliant Chinese shawl, was flung on the bed, and she was running about in a little silk petticoat, a narrow sheath for her slender, supple beauty. Her hair, tossed back from her face, hung all soft and cloudy over her white arms and shoulders. Self-forgetfulness was, in her, as rare as it was delightful; both her companions were conscious of its charm. They stared at her in dumb but unconcealed admiration, moved to that immediate pleasure in beauty which was the strongest impulse in their natures. Lewis, especially, could not take his eyes away from her; he

was nervous and preoccupied, secretly dreading the night's work before him, shrinking from the effort, and she was like a reassurance, a solacing repose. There was a sort of dim gratitude in the looks which he cast at her. Teresa saw that he was half bewitched again and wondered if another period of reconciliation was due. She gauged in her mind the command over his senses which Florence so palpably possessed, and balanced against it the inevitable rebellious reaction in him, the rancour, the protest against domination, which had made the history of these two so stormy. She thought:

"Does she want him back? She could get him for a little while, when he's resting after the concert . . . "

She felt no personal concern in the idea that they should come together again; such thoughts would trouble her little in the careful, safe grave she was digging for herself. It was not in her disposition to be jealous of her cousin's beauty; she could never grudge a quality which so enriched the world. Nor was she afraid, now, of any failure in her own resolution, since she would not see Lewis again. He was not coming back to Chiswick after the concert; he would sleep that night in town and next day he was going abroad. He said that he did not know where he was going and the implication that he would not, at any rate, come back had been perfectly understood by the whole household. Florence had seemed to acquiesce. Nobody seriously believed that she was going to join him later, and this sudden tender cordiality was, therefore, very puzzling to Teresa, who could discover no cause for it. On no grounds could she explain the generosity with which Lewis, in spite of his amazing faults, was always treated, unless as an exhibition of that forgiving quality which she had once described to Charles as *bonté*, the persistent, noble benevolence which she firmly believed her cousin to possess.

"There you are," said Florence, finishing the tie. "Flat-

ten down your hair and make yourself neat. What do you want, Teresa?"

"My frock."

"Can you really not fasten your own frock? Come here."

"Is this neat?" asked Lewis, after dealing with the brush that had been given to him.

"Passably," said his wife.

"You look like a calf going garlanded to the sacrifice," Teresa told him.

Immediately she was sorry she had said it. It was a great deal too true. He did have very much the look of a dumb beast driven to the shambles, and all this festal preparation only made it worse. She exclaimed encouragingly:

"It'll be over quite soon, you know."

"Very soon," he agreed, with an unamiable expression. "Where shall we all be this time to-morrow? You'll be saying the multiplication table along with the other young ladies, Tessa. And I shall be . . . God knows where!"

This was not quite true as Teresa knew where. He had told her privately that he was going, by the early boat, to Brussels, in case she might feel disposed to slip out of the house next morning and join him; a communication which she had received with that mute obstinacy, that sulky demeanour of resolution, which was her last line of defence. But she did not point out his inaccuracy. She saw that the allusion to the garlanded calf had stung him, and she felt that he was perhaps justified in giving her an unkind reply. She merely made a noise of melancholy assent and retreated in good order. It was not until she had shut the door behind her and Lewis was halfway into his coat that the truth flashed across his mind. His wits that night were not at their best. He could hardly believe that he had said good-bye to her, that an incredible, impossible thing had really happened, that they would never speak to one another again. For a

few seconds he stood petrified; then he turned to Florence and said:

"I sha'n't see Tessa any more!"

"No," she said easily. "Except, of course, across the Regent's Hall. You can give us a special bow if you like. You . . . you won't be seeing me again, either, you know."

She glanced at him sideways. He was wrapped in thought and replied absently:

"No, I suppose not."

He wanted to tell her about it; she had been so nice all day. He was seized with a strong, sudden impulse to deal openly with her, to lay the whole truth before her, and to trust that the truth might mend matters. The truth, to him, was the story of Tessa's goodness, her sweet, staunch loyalty. There had been some baseness and enmity between the three of them, but none of it had touched Tessa, and he scarcely believed that it could live if it was brought into the light. He was going away. He had to leave his love behind him. It seemed to him that he might endure that if Florence would but comprehend her. He turned round and said to her, with a new, grave friendliness:

"I wish that you would be better friends with Tessa . . . that you would love her. She deserves to be loved. Everybody must, I think, that really knows her. If you could hear how she speaks of you, how she admires you, you . . . you couldn't help it. I don't think you quite understand how . . . how good she is."

"No . . . I don't quite understand," she said, with a bitterness which, in his eager appeal, he failed to remark.

"I can't bear to go away and leave her with people who don't know that," he said simply. "Do try, Florence! I know I'm a bad advocate. I know I've behaved very badly to you. This has been a wretched business and it's best that

I should go away, for I've only made you unhappy, and I should go on making you unhappy. But I feel that the worst thing I've done is that somehow I've put you and Tessa against each other. Because you ought to love each other. My fault, that is! I've not spoken plainly. You see . . . I love her so much . . . so much! I want to know that she'll be happy. And now I have to leave her with you and you treat her as if she was an enemy. She's not. What can I say? You are so much better fitted to love each other, you two, than I am to have anything to do with either of you. Oh, Florence, can't you see it? If you'd only see it, I could go away and say God bless you both."

She had not thought it possible that he could speak like this. In all their life together she had never heard these tones in his voice, or met that look of unreserved appeal save once in the Tyrol, when he first spoke to her of the little girls, and begged her to take them to England. She had loved him from that hour. And now she knew that it was all for Teresa, the gentleness which she had divined in him then. She had given her heart to Teresa's lover.

"Since when have you loved her so terribly?" she asked.

He didn't know. Always, he supposed.

"Why, then, did you marry me?"

"I was a fool. Oh, Florence, be angry with me, not with her! She's done nothing to deserve it. She loves you."

"Have you told her? Does she know?"

"Yes, she knows. And you knew it, too, didn't you? Didn't you? You've known it for a long time. That's why I'm speaking of it now, because you know it already, and you're a person one can dare to speak the truth to. And you were angry because I didn't tell it, weren't you? You thought you deserved straighter dealing. And now you see that it isn't her fault. You're too generous to do anything else . . . "

She would not look at him. Instead, she looked at her watch, and said that it was time for him to go. But the crazy fellow would not go; he still pleaded, hoping absurdly that this appeal might somehow make things easier for Tessa.

"Florence, don't put me off like this. Can't you see . . . "

"I can see no good in discussing this business now."

"If I could make you understand what she is really like," he cried despairingly. "I think she never could have a vile thought about anybody. She couldn't do a base thing. She . . . "

At that she cut him short, flinging at him abruptly the question which for weeks had tormented her, returning to her mind as often as she banished it. It burst from her.

"You may as well tell the whole truth now. What, exactly, has there been between you?"

"I've told you. I love her."

"And what does that mean? Is she your mistress?"

Though she would not look at him, she could feel the shock of his sudden anger. But he tried to control himself.

"No, she's not. I tell you, she'll have nothing to do with me because she loves you."

"I don't believe you."

"It's true. She would never be as unjust to you."

"What am I to believe? I've seen enough of the whole pack of you to know that you can't be trusted."

She went across to the dressing-table and began rapidly to pin up her hair. Glancing furtively into the glass she was surprised to see that this mortal wound had, as yet, written no history on her face. Only her eyes had an alarmed look. She said to herself that it was too soon. Lewis, watching her, was passing rapidly to a pitch of extreme fury, baffled by his helplessness and the necessity of leaving his friend in the power of a woman who hated and maligned her.



"Supposing you were right," he said, "what would you have done?"

"I should never forgive you."

"Her, you mean. But you won't forgive her now, when I swear she's done you no wrong; you're making a wicked mistake."

"There's no question of forgiveness where she is concerned. I have no very strong feelings about her; I think she's too . . . too contemptible. She's no better than Tony. She's wanton. This sort of thing was bound to occur sooner or later, I suppose. And it happened to be you, because you haven't the decency to respect your wife's house. I should have foreseen it. No, it's you I shall never forgive."

"Oh, yes, you would, my dear! You'd forgive me anything."

He said this with as much insolence as he could muster, only desiring to punish her for speaking so ill of Tessa. He flung in her teeth the numberless occasions when she had allowed him to cajole her into submission and forgiveness. And when she would not turn round he crossed the room and seized her by the shoulders, wrenching her round and whispering:

"Always ready to forgive me, you've been! Always so generous! Tessa thinks you're an angel. She doesn't know how easy you are to manage."

"Never . . . after this . . . never again . . ."

"Oh, yes! As often as I like. You would! You would!"

"I hate you!"

"Women like you are fond of saying that. It means nothing."

"I pray to God I may never see you again . . ."

"I've heard that before, too."

"Is this how you treat her? I hope it is. I hope you make her suffer as I do . . ."

"Oh, no!"

He flung her away from him and repeated:

"Not at all. It would be impossible for her to suffer as you do. She has some pride. And then she's not like any of the rest of you. If I tried my fascinating ways on her she'd give me a black eye!"

And he took himself off.

Florence stood where he had left her. She hardly moved until, a few minutes later, she heard the front door clap after him and the sound of his footsteps hurrying away down the river path. Then, with a kind of hasty, mechanical precision, she finished doing her hair and put on her dress. One clear thought remained in her mind. She must hold herself undefeated until the concert was over; for to-night she must pretend that nothing was amiss. And to-morrow she would go back to Cambridge, to her father, and never so much as think of Lewis again. And she would tell her father the truth about this betrayal, so that Teresa's evil name might never be spoken to her.

Nothing in her life, not even her love, had been so absorbing and powerful as was this hatred for her cousin. She was glad to be so angry. At last she had a justification for the gathering suspicion and resentment of months. Passion held her together under the shock which had snapped her life in two. It gave coherence to her thoughts and enabled her to master herself sufficiently for the business of the evening. Of Lewis and the atrocious things he had said she would not allow herself to think; it was enough to know that Teresa was responsible for it all.

She was almost calm again when a knock at the door startled her. Sebastian stood there, remarkably respectable in a new Eton jacket, demanding smelling salts or *sal volatile*.

"What for? Are you ill?"

"Tessa is."

"What's the matter with her?"

"I don't know. She's lying on her bed. She looks very funny."

"Oh, indeed! Then she had better not come to the concert."

They went upstairs to Teresa's room and found her sitting on her bed, wiping the sweat from her face, in a spasm of nervous sobbing. Her pain had been bad for a little time after she heard Lewis leave the house, but she was better now and declared that nothing was the matter. Florence became very stern and efficient, administered sal volatile, dismissed Sebastian, and said firmly:

"You had better not come to the concert if you feel like this, Teresa. Did you have those palpitations?"

"I'm quite well, really."

"Still, one can't have these ways. If you stay quietly at home to-night you'll know how to control yourself another time perhaps."

"There won't be another time. I'm coming, Florence."

"I shall not take you."

"Then I shall go by myself. You can't stop me. I have money. I shall go the minute you've left the house."

"Oh, very well. There won't be, as you say, another time. You can't disgrace yourself more than you've done already."

"What do you mean?" asked Teresa mildly.

Florence hesitated, but her feelings got the better of her. She must speak, even though she might be sorry afterwards. She would speak now, because prudence might stop her later on. She explained in a dry, gentle voice:

"Because I've never spoken of it, you don't think I haven't seen . . . what's been going on all these months? I've seen it, and I've tried to ignore it, because it was so . . . so odious. I've tried to make excuses

to myself; to tell myself that you are too young to know what are you doing. I'd meant to say nothing of it. I knew you'd learn to be ashamed when you are older. But . . . "

"Ashamed?"

Teresa was really astonished. If Florence knew all, it was natural that she should be annoyed, but nobody, surely, need be ashamed of themselves.

"Yes! Ashamed! Because I'm ashamed for you. And now I feel that it's only fair that you should know one or two things before you go away. So I'll speak now, and then we'll never mention this again. Teresa, you must know that among decent people a woman who openly pursues a man is considered to have lost all her dignity and self-respect. She's despised and degraded and condemned by everybody. Especially when it is a man who doesn't particularly care for her. I can't . . . I can't tell you how contemptible she makes herself. And to see quite a young girl doing it is horrible."

"Yes, but what has that to do with me? I haven't been pursuing a man that doesn't particularly care for me. It's a mug's game; I agree with you."

"You know perfectly well that you have. It's been almost impossible for me to say anything, since the man has been my husband; but now that he has gone, now that you will not see him ever, ever again, I can say it. You've thrust yourself upon him. You've thrown yourself at his head in a perfectly uncontrolled way. It's been quite obvious to everyone."

"I love him. I always have. And perhaps anybody could see it. But it's not true, what you said."

"It's quite true. He's spoken of it to me himself."

"He? Oh, no! You must have made a mistake, Florence. He would never . . . "

"It's odious, as I've said before, to have to take you to

task for your manner to my husband, but for your own sake . . . ”

“I’m afraid I must take you to task for your manner to me. I don’t think you mean it, really, Florence! But I will not have these things said to me. It’s not my fault that I love him. I did long ago, before you came to the Tyrol. It isn’t a happy thing at all; it’s brought nothing but sadness to me. Only it has been so much all of my life that I couldn’t want it to be different, any more than I could want to be changed into another person. And I’ve come to see, since I’ve been here, that we can’t all be together now that he is your husband. That’s why I agreed to go to school. I wouldn’t otherwise. You know I said at first that I wouldn’t. But ever since I saw that I ought to go, I’ve said not a word against it, now have I? All these weeks! I wanted to write to Uncle Charles often, to get him to let me off. But I never did.”

“You’d better not write to him. I shall have to tell him how difficult all this has been, and then he’ll see, as I do, that you are better at school.”

“If you tell him untrue things about me, I shall tell him the truth myself.”

“Which of us do you think he’ll believe?”

Teresa was silent. She was becoming frightened of Florence. Yet she was accustomed to associate anger with hard words and violence, and she could hardly believe that deadly insults are sometimes spoken gently. Florence, so lovely and dignified, could not really hate her, could not really mean to deny her the right to love and to suffer. This controlled animosity was something quite new, and it alarmed her terribly. She said, backing away:

“You are making a mistake. You don’t mean these things. Something funny must have happened. . . . What’s the matter . . . ”

But Florence would not stop. She went on, low voiced and relentless:

"You speak of love! What can you know of it? I wonder that you dare. When you are older perhaps you'll be ashamed . . . "

"I know all about it," interrupted Teresa sombrely.

"What do you mean by that?"

The question was rapped out with a rising shrillness, and Teresa exclaimed in a panic:

"What's the matter with you? Florence! Don't! Don't look at me like that! Don't speak like that! I've done you no harm. What did you think I'd done?"

Before her eyes the woman was turning into a Medusa; she shut them, to escape from that stony, vindictive head, thrust close into her face. She felt her shoulder grasped and the hard, hoarse voice whispered again into her ear:

"Tell me what you mean."

"Don't! I won't." She sobbed and struggled. "Let me go!"

With a scream of terror she got herself free and ran from the room and downstairs and out of the house. Florence, left alone in the little bedroom, drew a long breath of relief. In five minutes the accumulated venom of many months had found a vent. She was glad now, though she was aware that she might repent later. She was triumphant. It was even satisfying to know that she had hurled a rank name after her flying enemy. To-morrow she would probably blush to think that she could have screamed such a word out through the house, but filthy language was the only sort of speech which the Sangers understood.

"Thank goodness! I've put the fear of God into her!" she thought. "She deserved every word of it. How frightened she looked and how shocked! One would think she'd

never heard anybody swear before. But I suppose it must have been rather a shock to hear me swearing!"

The first chill of doubt fell upon her exaltation, and she hurried off, back to her room, to put on her shawl.

Teresa was, indeed, nearly shocked to death. Her fear was like a nightmare, she did not know where to turn or how to protect herself from this horrible woman who looked like an angel and talked like a devil. Uncle Charles might prate about the merit of a civilized life, but there was no safety in it. If Florence, who had seemed so beautiful and so good, was really like this, there was no safety in it. Only she could never get away; they had trapped her now. Lewis, the only friend she had in the world, was lost to her. He was gone beyond her reach. He would have taken her and shielded her, and though he might be a little rough sometimes she would always know where she was with him. Besides, she loved him. And yet she had made him go away. She had been mad.

Still gasping with indignation and fright she ran a little way in the dusk along the river path and then, looking furtively around her, came to a standstill. There was nobody on the path and all the houses seemed quiet. A couple of swans paddled lazily over the dim water, up past the island, but otherwise the river, too, was deserted. She could hear the tide, which was almost high, gurgling against the barges moored to the island. She debated with herself the practical difficulties in the way of a quick escape and came to the conclusion that it would be no use to jump off the wooden embankment at the edge of the path. She would merely stick in the shallow mud. She must go farther down, where it was deeper at the edge. She started back towards the bridge and collided with a person hurrying along to the station.

"*Scusa!*" said the person.

It was Roberto going to the concert, in his bowler hat, with

his going-to-Mass umbrella under his arm. He always took his umbrella to concerts in the old days. She must get back there somehow. She must get to Lewis.

"It's you, is it?" she said. "You'll be the last person to speak to the deceased. I hope they won't hang you for murdering me, Roberto. They might do anything in this country."

*"Scusa!"*

"Remember me, but . . . ah, forget my fate!" she said impressively.

*"Subito!"* said Roberto obligingly.

He said this when injunctions were laid upon him which he did not understand; it testified to his willingness. Teresa laughed. She knew that she could not possibly jump into the river. There was still too much to laugh at. She would go to Lewis and they would get away from it all. She asked Roberto if he had pencil and paper. He had, and she scrawled a message to Lewis telling him that she would meet him by the early boat train to-morrow. This note was to be given into his very hands, as she impressed upon Roberto in two languages.

"Take it into the artists' room," she insisted. "You must get there somehow."

*"Subito!"*

Roberto had spent most of his life in artists' rooms and had no doubt of his capacity to get there. He trotted off down the river path. Teresa sauntered back to the house, kicking little pebbles sideways into the water as Lewis was apt to do. They had many identical gestures.



## CHAPTER XXII

THEIR places were in the first circle, well at the side and almost above the orchestra so that they had a good view of the house. Sebastian and Teresa, having wrangled a little over the best seat, devoted themselves to a scrutiny of the packed masses in the gallery in order to discover Roberto. They waved excitedly when they found him. Florence looked down at the arena below her, and observed the sort of people who were coming in, and was confirmed in her estimation of the evening's importance. Whatever Millicent might say, they were coming. She saw friends who never went to concerts unless they were important, people who were not even musical but whose opinions were universally respected; all the people who had gone to hear "Prester John," and another choicer group which would not, apparently, listen to Sanger but which was curious about the Dodd Symphony. She had got them all, sitting below and around her—all that world which she desired to conquer. The applause and recognition of this audience would, in her eyes, justify to the world her belief that she had married a great man. It would be her defence against Churchill criticism, and now that her life had come so entirely to grief she badly needed a defence.

She nodded to her friends, here and there, in a leisurely way. Her concert-room demeanour was in full force. She held her round, dark head very high over the glowing, lavish folds of her shawl, and she was sparing of any gesture with her hands. She was determined not to be agitated and voluble; she would not twitter as so many women will when

their men are on trial before the world. To be serene, assured, beautiful, that was her part of the business, and if she had not always managed it in the past it was because she had been forced to appear in public with a train of strident young Sangers. In future . . . but there would be no future. Lewis had passed all permissible bounds, and they were to part. But she must forget that until after the concert. The orchestra was trickling in.

The children, hanging over the edge of the balcony, were exchanging salutations with a few odd-looking acquaintances.

Old Sir Bartlemy Pugh, having seen them from the opposite side of the house, came round to speak to her. She was glad, for she had caught sight of Millicent coming in with Lewis's father, who was looking more than ever like a civic portrait. Both he and his daughter were staring up at her companion with interest, nor were they the only people in the Regent's Hall who would notice that the old gentleman had hobbled all the way round the first circle to make himself agreeable to young Mrs. Dodd. She talked calmly and without undue animation, but a little flush of pleasure glowed in her cheeks.

"All the world and his wife seem to be here," said Sir Bartlemy. "It's a long time since I dragged my gouty limbs to an affair like this. And I hear that they've put the Symphony after Jansen's horrid little bit of work. I needn't have hurried over my dinner. I've a good mind to go home and finish my coffee!"

"But I'm most anxious to hear the Turkish Suite," declared Florence, who was secretly delighted at the intimacy of these remarks.

Very seldom did Sir Bartlemy permit himself to speak slightly of a contemporary, and then only in the company of close friends. She had never heard him call anything

horrid before; she felt that she had graduated in his friendship.

"Mawkish! Mawkish!" he complained, shaking his head. "Turkish Delight, we call it, down at Greenwich. How are you, Dawson? Do you realize we are in for the Turkish Suite?"

Doctor Dawson was making his way to a seat behind Florence. He was accompanied by a group of pale young women, members of his celebrated choir, who escorted him everywhere. One of them carried a railway rug to wrap round his knees if he found the Regent's Hall draughty. He grinned at Sir Bartlemy and scowled sideways at Florence with a hasty:

"How are you? I've just been round back there, and Lewis is here all right. I congratulate you, ma'am, on producing him at the right hall on the right evening. It takes a clever wife to do that. It was a good idea sending him here in charge of the butler."

"The butler?" said Florence, a little puzzled.

"Your Italian fellow. . . . He seemed to be chaperoning Lewis when first I went in down there. I don't know where he disappeared to."

"Roberto?" Florence gaped. "I didn't send him. Are you sure? He's up in the gallery. . . ."

"Quite sure. Have you met Baines?"

And he introduced her to a little old man who had come in with him, an almost legendary person who had trained more great singers than any three men of his generation. He was now so ancient that most people thought he must be dead. He lived at Wimbledon, took a few pupils to amuse himself, and turned up once a year at the opera in order to remind the world that he was still alive. Hardly ever did he attend a concert and his appearance for the Dodd Symphony was unexpected and sensational.

He twinkled at Florence a rheumy eye which had ogled four generations of pretty women and talked away to her, in a high cackle, above the confused din of the tuning orchestra, the booms of double basses beneath, and the short, sudden brays of clarinets. He told her that he had met Lewis in Vienna, ten years before, at a supper given by Sanger.

"We have Sanger's circus with us still," exclaimed Doctor Dawson. "This is one."

He stretched an arm, caught Sebastian by the back of his jacket, and turned him round. Branwell Baines looked a little surprised at such cleanliness and order, and commented:

"Well, well, I wouldn't have guessed it! I was sorry to miss 'Prester John,' Mrs. Dodd, but I'm getting on, you know, and I don't go about very much. Saving your presence, I had a little chill on the liver, and these east winds . . ."

Here there was a great outcry from the children that Ike and Tony had come and was it not very soon for Tony to be out? Florence and her three cavaliers turned to look downwards, and saw that eight out of every ten people were glancing curiously their way. Antonia, still a little frail but regal, in black velvet with the most amazing pearls, was leaning upon Jacob's arm, receiving the compliments and obvious congratulations of a number of Semitic-looking gentlemen, who most of them found it necessary to kiss her hand. She looked up to where Florence was sitting between Sir Bartlemy and Branwell Baines, with Dawson leaning over the back of her chair, and waved gaily. Florence smiled serenely back and bowed to Mrs. Leyburn and a good many other people.

The lovely ladies who were to play the harp in Jansen's Turkish Suite were proceeding to their lone post in front of all the forest of music stands and shirt fronts. The noise of tuning was beginning to subside and Sir Bartlemy, with a hasty farewell, ambled back to his seat on the far side of the

circle. Florence, settling herself and her trappings comfortably into her seat, felt that Teresa, beside her, had stiffened and was sitting bolt upright. She looked down and saw that Lewis was making his way up on to the platform. There was a little applause, not very much, not enough to call for acknowledgment, and he took no notice of it. A moment later he had mounted the *estrade*, and his back was turned upon them all. He tapped on the rail and the hum of the hall behind him sank to a rustle. The rustle was silence.

Music stole out like a mist into the great spaces of the building. It hung in the air in front of Florence, an almost visible fabric, a flowing pattern of strings cut through by the sharp notes of horns, blurring the piled tiers of faces which went up, and up, to the dark, high gallery. Down below, the orchestra was a chequered tapestry of black and white, across which the slender white bows moved all together. Only Lewis stood out clearly, and Florence discovered how very well shaped his head was, when seen from the back, a thing which had been long known to Teresa. Standing thus, he looked a different man altogether. She examined him curiously through the pleasant measures of the Turkish Suite, which seemed nice music, if a trifle saccharine. His carriage as a conductor pleased her enormously, but she wished that she could see his face. He was very still and there was, to her eyes, almost too much gravity in his pose, considering the work in hand. The orchestra, sweating their way through the Caucasian dances of the second movement, must be finding some source of energy in his expression for he did almost nothing, and his immobility contrasted strangely with their manifest toil. Then, as a crescendo swelled on a faint quiver of his baton, she wondered what sort of a noise would be heard if he should take it into his head to exert himself. The Symphony in Three Keys had plenty of noise in it. She began to get excited.

The thing was over unexpectedly soon and the applause was considerable. Florence found herself a little enthusiastic; it was better music than she had thought. More people were coming in. The clapping went on. Lewis, pale, wild, and unconcerned, came back and bowed unsmilingly to the gangway between the stalls. The clapping went on. They wanted Jimmy Jansen. He came and bowed energetically to everybody, but he did not look very pleased. Doctor Dawson leant across his railway rug, and poked Florence in the back, and whispered:

"Good man! Jansen wrote that last *allegro ma non troppo*, and he took it *presto*. 'Pon my word, it's a vast improvement!"

"I expect he thought he'd written it himself," said Teresa with a little chuckle. "It's a mistake he often makes when he's conducting a piece. He stops and says, 'Now why did I do that?'"

"That's nonsense," said Florence coldly.

She had almost succeeded in forgetting Teresa, and it was necessary that she should. To be married to a man like Lewis was not easy; there would be, always, so much to forget. But she did not think that anything in the future would be as difficult as this estrangement for which Teresa was responsible. Almost she felt that she could not pardon it; it was too outrageous. The only way was to banish the whole episode from her mind, to send the girl away, out of their lives, to think of her, if possible, in a spirit of tolerance and pity. It was unjust to hate her, for she could not help being what she was, an unfortunate little animal without training, without very much intelligence, so ignorant as to be almost blameless, obeying blindly the instincts which commanded her. But she had been, unwittingly, the cause of much grief; it was her fault that Lewis had said those heart-shattering things. Really, he was too cruel. It was impossible to live with him.

The scene to-night must have ended it. Only that they were all like that; some of them were much worse. Sanger used to beat his wives. Lewis never did that.

All these thoughts were flashing through Florence's mind as she told Doctor Dawson that she had liked the Turkish Suite.

"Very noble, he made it sound," agreed Doctor Dawson. "It's a trick he has."

She remembered how he had played the Kreutzer. It was certainly a trick he had, if nobility, grandeur of interpretation can be called a trick. Her mind roved over their life together, as she tried to decipher in the man she knew the features of the artist thus revealed. He displayed, as a musician, a largeness of spirit which she had never divined in the man. She confided to Doctor Dawson that she had never known that he was so good a conductor.

"Very few of us knew," was his reply.

He was with them again, looking different, looking more collected, mounting the *estrade* with a sort of brisk determination which took her by surprise. The silence, under his lifted baton, was complete and sudden like the flash before a thunder clap, a soundless shock, a pause. The baton fell and the lordly racket of his Symphony was let loose on them. An astonishing pandemonium it was, written at a time when Sanger dominated all his ideas, yet with a shape and contour which passed perpetually beyond the purely revolutionary formula invented by his master. Its long, striding intervals, its violent rhythms, fell upon the ear, at first, like an outrage, and Florence felt, as she had always felt when she heard this Symphony, that her powers of criticism were failing her. She was helpless under the force of ideas stronger than her own; her musical idiom, generally so crystal clear, was losing shape, growing dim, crumbling. She was transported into a region of wide spaces, formless ether, mist and the flames of lost

stars, where the imagination, suddenly enlarged, grasped ultimately the idea of order, the slow procession of the glittering worlds weaving a pattern in the void.

"I wasn't mistaken," she thought. "It's wonderful. He's a great man. I don't care what any one else thinks."

She looked down and watched him, as he directed this uncharted storm which he had willed, his baton darting and flickering in a great wind of sound, his red hair pushed away up on to the top of his head. Then she looked at the hall and saw no more planets, but Jacob and Antonia listening with their mouths open. Tony did not like it; she hated loud noises and the drums, of which Lewis was making lavish use, frightened her as much as a thunderstorm. Jacob was patting her hand to soothe her. Jimmy Jansen and the critics, just behind, were grinning broadly. Florence scanned more faces anxiously; a good many people looked amused. She found herself growing resentful of their impenetrable stupidity; she could better forgive those who looked horrified. Then she fell to listening again, wholly lost in the delight of the second movement and its theme for strings. The drums had died away; they could just be heard, the faintest heart beat, through the dying cadences of 'cellos and violas. Clarinets and horns were silent. Lewis, having bludgeoned his audience into submission, having broken down their powers of resistance, that defence against dangerous beauty which the sane mind will preserve, was prepared to play them a tune. He could do what he liked, now, with those who had accepted his art. And even to those who did not, his theme was beautiful, for he could, for all his self-denying, write those inevitable tunes of which there are so few in the world. This interlude, heightened to a supreme simplicity by contrast with the din which had gone first, was so short as to be little more than a reprieve, an illustration of the peculiar effect of melody heard after a shock. It passed, and the beat quickened to the fury



of a last movement and a return to Sanger's methods. Teresa and Sebastian, who loved Lewis when he was tuneful and loathed his work with the drums, sighed deeply as the respite ended.

Florence, coming out of her dream, remembered suddenly that she had been upon the point of parting with this man, she could not clearly remember why. But she had actually thought of going back to Cambridge, of allowing him to go away without her. She had nearly lost him, and yet he had been hers. He should be that again. All her charm, all her wisdom should be used to win him back. He was a great musician; he was worthy of all the love and devotion she could give. If he wanted to live abroad, she would go with him. If he was difficult, she would bear with him. If he was cruel, she would steel her heart to endure it. But she would never, never, never let him go.

The storm swept on to its climax, ending with a crash, and Lewis, frantic, distraught, leapt into the air, as though he would dive head first off his little platform into the midst of his perspiring orchestra. The shattered audience pulled itself together and applauded doubtfully. A few enthusiasts shouted a little and somewhere, at the back of the house, there was an attempt at hissing. An atmosphere of disorder hung over the hall, as though it had seen lately some deed of incredible violence. Many people took their departure, and others hurried off to get a drink somewhere. Listening had been thirsty work. Doctor Dawson pulled himself up, handed his railway rug to one of his ladies, and stumped off to bed, snarling, as he passed the benevolent Baines:

"What d'you make of it, hey? Never heard such a filthy hullabaloo in your life, did you?"

But the kind old man merely waved a deprecating, benignant hand, complaining:

"Ah, these young men! These young men! He'll change

everything, will he? Why should he? I don't want it changed. And why, when he can write a second movement like that . . . but," turning to Florence, "I trust I may tell you that his conducting is . . . like nothing that I've ever watched . . . and I've seen a good deal in my time. The most triumphant. . . ."

Millicent came up and said:

"I'm afraid it's been rather a failure, my dear. You like it, I suppose? Of course, these polytonic things don't seem ugly to some people. Personally, I thought those drums were like having the plumbers in. And what instrument in the world is it that makes those queer yawning noises?"

Florence could not tell her. But Sebastian, who could, explained it all very lucidly, to the amusement of Sir Bartlemy, who had come round to sit in Doctor Dawson's place.

"Well, Florence," he said, "it's a little like an ogre at a tea-party; your husband's Symphony after the Turkish Suite. Why has Dawson gone? Isn't he going to listen to the Concerto? Silly fellow! Why, that's the crux of the whole affair."

"I don't feel up to it," said Millicent. "I feel as if I'd fallen down several flights of stairs. And where's the sense of putting a weighty classic after a thing like this? How can people be expected to listen? It's too late."

"That's it! That's it!" chuckled Sir Bartlemy, rubbing his hands. "That's a little joke our friend Dodd has got up his sleeve. Listen! Lord bless you, of course they'll listen. They won't be able to help it now. That's his doing. Nothing makes you listen so well as a good shaking up. They'll find it as easy as falling off a log, you see!"

"They like it better," said Millicent vaguely.

"Like it better? Of course they do. We all do. We like it so much that we don't listen to it. We miss half. Tonight we'll miss nothing; he won't let us."

Florence wondered, later, if this was indeed true. Although she was herself moved, as never before, by the next item, the overpowering applause surprised her. To many people present its success was a vindication of the old music against the new. The Press, next morning, hailed Dodd as a conductor and laughed at his Symphony. But Jacob Birnbaum, down in the stalls, was discussing with his friends the details of the next concert with much guttural joviality. It must be very soon, said Jacob.

Lewis, however, never gave another concert in London.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE train, running over points near Ashford, changed its smooth rhythm for a succession of loud, clanking jerks. Lewis roused from an uncomfortable doze. He opened his eyes at the morning sunlight shining in his face and discovered confusedly that the night was over.

He tried to think. It was one of those bad days when everything is out of gear, and he could not put two ideas together. He was aware of the slowness of mind, the extreme lassitude of spirit, which always overtook him after a concert. He was listening for some coherence in the noise of the train and could find none. The sun in his eyes gave him a headache. He blinked at it angrily.

The person opposite leant forward and pulled down a blind so that his face was shaded. Looking towards her, in a sort of dumb gratitude, he was not much surprised to discover that it was Tessa. But it took him a little time to remember why she was there and that they were on their way to Dover. He recollected slowly how Roberto had brought him her message, the night before, and how he had nearly missed the train. He had bounded down the platform at the very last moment and she was waiting for him, steadfast but a little pale, by the barrier. And as they slid clear of the murky station, into the sunlight, he had fallen asleep, only rousing for a second when they crossed the bridge because Tessa opened the window and hung out, taking a last look at London and the glittering river. Now, as far as he could see, they were deep in Kent, rushing southwards through a bright, windy morning.

It was lovely to be with her. She was the only person in

the world with the wits to draw blinds without being asked. He found his tongue and enquired if she had breakfasted. She shook her head.

"Nor have I," he said. "We'll get something on the boat."

"You can if you like. For me to eat on a boat is simply a waste of good food. I've a queasy stomach."

The other people in the carriage looked at her with a sort of wondering, dull resentment, and Lewis said:

"It's inconsiderate of you to talk in that way. We've all got to go on the boat." Then, vaguely: "Are you ill?"

He hardly knew why he asked this; but she did not look right somehow.

"No. It's all the fuss yesterday, and the concert, and not sleeping, and getting up early, and having no food."

This catalogue of hardship almost reassured him. Perhaps, after all, she did not look so very queer. He told her to wake him up when they got to Dover. Then he shut his eyes, but opened them again a moment later to take another look at her. She had put on, for this expedition, a new serge school suit, very neat and brief, and she had a brown paper parcel by way of luggage. It occurred to him, for the first time, that she might be unhappy and frightened at the step she was taking. He smiled at her and she returned his look a little dimly, like a person a long way off. He tried to think of some very protecting, comfortable thing to say but could only manage to demand if she was quite all right. She nodded, and he reflected that she ought to know how to look after herself, having been brought up to it. The blessed peace of being with her stole over him again and he drifted off into sleep.

She sat staring out of the window at the long rows of hop poles, spinning like the spokes of a wheel. These had interested her, she remembered, when she came first to England,

less than a year before. And now, so unexpectedly soon, she was off again, having learnt in this short time a number of things which would be in future of no use to her whatever. She had an idea that, for her peace of mind, she had best forget everything that had happened since Sanger's death. She was going back to the ways of her childhood, not because they seemed admirable to her but because there was no place for her elsewhere.

She was profoundly happy, but a little bewildered at this sudden change in her life. It was such a miracle to find herself alive and with Lewis instead of dead and at school. It seemed to her now as though she had escaped annihilation by the merest chance and she could hardly believe in her recovered safety. Having chosen life instead of death, she was secure for ever. She sat very still with her hands folded, watching her friend as he slept. He was all huddled up in his corner, and his face in repose looked young and weary, the harsh lines which scored it in his guarded hours seemed now painful and innocent. She saw that he was tired out, and she felt sorry when they flashed in and out of the chalk cuttings by the sea and she knew that she must wake him.

The morning air at Dover was very cold and her paper parcel, though not large, had grown so heavy that she nearly dropped it as she followed Lewis up the gangplank on to the boat. A chattering crowd pushed her this way and that and she could see no place where she might sit down and rest herself.

"Oh, dear," she gasped, "I'm so cold! I'm so tired! Couldn't we get a chair or something? There are some men with chairs."

"Those are for the first-class passengers, my dear. Let's walk about a bit and get warm."

She shivered so much that he opened his bag and pulled out his old yellow muffler to wrap round her throat and shoulders.

It brought back the old times very suddenly, for in the Tyrol he had worn it on all occasions and she had never seen it since. Florence had suppressed it. It smelt of a good many things, chiefly tobacco. She snuggled into it gratefully and they found a sheltered place where they could watch the great rattling crane which heaved up endless loads of luggage and plunged them into the hold. Teresa thought of all the clothes in all those boxes and looked at her own parcel and felt glad that she had kept so free of possessions during her English sojourn. Even her lustre bowl was broken; she was as free as the sea-gulls flashing through the sunlight over their heads.

Presently the bell rang and the siren hooted and the long line of porters ran back the gangplanks. The boat drew away from Dover quayside and the blank wall that hides the trains, and the gray terraced town with its white cliffs, and all the ramparts of the English coast, getting lower and smaller. Teresa waved good-bye to it and to Uncle Charles's niece, a shadowy person, the creation of his persuasive fancy, and once, for a short time, almost convincing. It was not a difficult farewell, for the capacities of this dimly apprehended young woman had been so unripe, her destiny had lain so very much in the future, that she might never have come to life. Teresa had lost faith in her.

They had not gone far into the windy morning before she was compelled to go down into that Limbo where Belgian stewardesses in dubious aprons ply their grim trade. She felt desperately ill, but not so bad that she could not enjoy the antics of her fellow passengers. In an undertone she rehearsed their complaints, announcing her condition in every sort of accent, Glasgow, Kensington, Cambridge, Dublin, Leeds, Wapping, and New York. But before the end of the crossing, which was a bad one, she lost interest in life. Time had ceased to exist for her, when a voice penetrated the chilly fog of exhaustion which shut out the world.

"Mademoiselle is alone? She has no friends?"

Two stewardesses were looking at her in evident anxiety. Their faces floated in the fog above her head. One of them said that she was blue and they asked again if she was alone, this time in French, and very loud, blaring at her like a couple of trombones.

"*Toute seule . . .*" she replied weakly. "*. . . non . . . un monsieur . . . là haut . . . on arrive déjà?*"

"*Nous sommes en retard . . . Mademoiselle est vraiment malade? Elle se trouve mieux à présent?*"

"Woirse and woirse!" said Teresa, with a recollection of the lady from New York in the next bunk. If she could survive this crossing she would make Lewis laugh, telling him about all these ladies. She said in a stronger voice that she could do with some brandy if they had any.

They gave her brandy and she found the strength to struggle to her feet. All round her the battered wrecks of women were gathering themselves and their possessions together. She looked in her purse and found half a crown and three half-pence. She gave the half crown to the stewardess and climbed rather uncertainly up the steep ladder. She noticed that the woman stood at the bottom watching her anxiously as if afraid she might fall back suddenly.

"I must look frightful," she thought.

Outside, the cold air did her good. She found that they were nearly in, slipping past the endless Ostend Plage, with its fringe of hotels and casinos. It was a boisterous, changeable afternoon and the enormous sky seemed to be full of clouds, all sailing at different speeds, speared through with brilliant, watery shafts of sunlight. Behind them was a gray forbidding waste, already blurred with rain.

A dense crowd was lined up for the gangplanks and she could not see Lewis anywhere. But as they began to stream



off the boat, she thought she caught sight of him, well ahead of her, going into the Douane. Thither she followed him and got an official to deal with her parcel, after a long interval of pushing and shouting. She had to untie the string, and as she was doing it up again she was appalled to hear somebody call out that the Brussels train was just starting. Gathering her possessions in her arms, she ran, strewing articles of toilet over the railway lines. Lewis, hanging out of a carriage window, hailed her:

"Here you are! Jump in! I nearly went without you!"

She jumped in, and the train started.

"Your toothbrush is on the line," he said, taking a last look out of the window. "What made you cut it so fine? Were you changing your money?"

"No," she replied, at last getting her breath back. "I didn't like to change such a large amount in a hurry."

She showed him her three halfpence and he laughed.

"You'll have to buy me another toothbrush," she said.

"On the contrary, you must do without one. Many most admirable people do."

She raised her eyebrows and asked sweetly:

"Were you sick on the boat, my turtle dove?"

He said not, but she scarcely believed him for he looked very yellow. They were going along through the flatness of Belgium and he would not tell her what any of the towns were. Whereupon she made all her enquiries of an impudent looking young Belgian beside her, explaining that her husband, with a gesture at Lewis, had never been abroad before and was recovering from the effects of sea sickness. The youth, with a broad stare at her swinging plaits and school clothes, asked pointedly if Madame had never been abroad before either. Madame replied with some aplomb that she had; she was still sustained by the brandy she had taken on the boat, and talked a great deal to all the people in their

carriage, giving much uneasiness to Lewis, who knew that their appearance was odd and might cause comment. He was relieved when they reached Brussels and got out of the train unmolested.

They walked a little way and then took a tram. Teresa was silent now and docile. She sat beside Lewis, as they rumbled along towards a distant suburb, leaning against his shoulder and watching the stormy sunset behind the houses. It was a menacing sky: rags and banners of red cloud hung above the noisy streets and lit the faces of the people with an angry flame. The cries and shouts of the city sounded in her ears like cries of danger, warnings called forth by the wild light. Her dim remembrances of Brussels were not like this. When she had been there as a little girl it had seemed rather dull; this was a town imagined in a dream, a flaming, adventurous place where anything might happen. She looked up at Lewis to see if he, too, found it exciting. He was gazing at the bright sky with the extreme concentration of purpose which he used for all important things; it was the first time that he had looked really awake since they started on their journey. He seemed to be gathering in that noisy radiance and stowing it away in his mind. An idea came to her and she asked:

"Where are we going?"

He removed his light, steady eyes from the fiery clouds and blinked at her, as if trying to remember. Then he said:

"To Mdme. Marxse. She'll put us up. You remember her? You all stayed in her house once before, didn't you?"

"I think I remember," she said slowly.

When she was a very little girl Sanger's circus had spent some months with Mdme. Marxse. Only she seemed to remember an old woman who was unbelievably fat. Oh, but monstrous! At that age one sees things out of scale.

"Is she fat?" she asked.

"Fat! We call her *Reine des Fées*. You see!"

Teresa remembered now that that was what they did call her. Yes, and she had a bust like a broad shelf, buoyed up by a much-boned corsage; it was with some awe that the young Sangers had watched her eat, so impossible was it that she could see her plate. The same idea had occurred to all of them—that it would be much better if she would put the plate on the shelf just under her chin. And like a lurid picture stood out the day when Sanger had said it. Suddenly he had leant forward in the middle of a silent meal and said persuasively:

"Reine, why don't you allow your plate to repose on your bosom? It would go better. You are dropping your food on your best gown."

Another memory dawned: Evelyn, the beautiful mother who was so difficult to remember, had reproved the children for giggling, in case Mdme. Marxse might be mortified.

"Must we go there?" asked Teresa, rather reluctantly.

"She knows us all," explained Lewis. "She'll . . . she'll hold her tongue . . . if anybody comes asking for us. . . ."

"I see. I've quite forgotten Brussels."

But when they stood on the doorstep of Maison Marxse, she recognized the house opposite which used to have a bird-cage with a canary in it. The smell of the entresol, a mixed smell of onions, stale scent, dirty black clothes and dust, carried her back more entirely into childhood. The door shut behind them like a trap and the meagre boy who had let them in went shuffling down the passage in front of them. An overpowering odour of the past rose up and clutched at her in the little room where Madame Marxse, larger even than memory had painted her, wheezed upon a sofa amid sacred reliquaries, pampas grass, and cats. It was such a small

room, far too small for its occupant; it must have been built round her for she could never have got in at the door.

Lewis was greeted with a cascade of asthmatic chuckles and many shrill questions. Teresa had time to look about her. She remembered the picture over the stove, a puzzling group of a much-curved nude lady and a swan, which recent study of a classical dictionary enabled her to identify. But in spite of this piece of information she felt very much like a little girl, as she stood shyly clinging to her lover's hand, while he bargained with *Reine des Fées* for a room. Presently she was pulled forward and introduced. The old woman remembered her, and she was folded in an odious, flabby embrace spiced with a whiff of strong waters. Enquiries were made after the other brothers and sisters. Caryl and Kate? How were they?

"I don't know," said Teresa vaguely. "When Sanger died we were all separated."

"Ah, that man! That man!" wheezed Madame. "So many children he had! It is unknown how many! And now all scattered? Here we have one. Thou knowest, *mignonne*? A brother of thine. My grandson."

"Yes," said Lewis. "I'd forgotten Paul. How is he, *Reine*?"

"But ill! We sha'n't keep him long. He is at school now, with the Jesuits. Many days his cough is bad and he cannot go. But still he wins all the prizes."

"Takes after his father," commented Lewis. "They all do. They're all too clever to live."

Teresa remembered the narrow-chested boy in the hall; she felt no enthusiasm on hearing that he was her brother. But it was probably true that he was intelligent; Sanger seemed to have scattered the curse of intellect most lavishly about the world. She got an uneasy glimpse of life's continuity; it appeared that these things could have no end. She wondered

how many of the children called to life by Sanger's lust would thank him for it. Her next thought caused her to tell Madame that Tony had a baby. Madame remembered Tony perfectly. A pretty little . . . And a mother already? Well, well! Teresa, it seemed, had also got a man. The little black eyes leered round at Lewis. Sanger's daughters were not likely to die old maids. Well, well! Lewis would teach her.

"For he's the first, isn't he, *petite ange*?"

Teresa nodded, still clinging to his hand.

"Thou couldst scarcely have begun younger," commented the old woman. "How old . . . say . . . fifteen? Mother of God! What a hurry the girls are in nowadays! Still, I was no older. . . ."

She plunged into grimy reminiscence. Lewis, who had scarcely listened to the conversation, became at last attentive and said impatiently in English:

"A bawdy old thing, isn't she?"

Teresa laughed. She thought Mdme. Marxse as good as a Shakespeare play at the "Nine Muses," a rich entertainment, better even than the sea-sick ladies. That was because she and Lewis were together; their completeness shut them off from the world. They were like people watching a comedy from a box, seeing more significance in life, savouring its humour more soundly, because in their hearts they were remote.

Mdme. Marxse had, it appeared, a room for them on the third floor. A fine room with a good bed.

"That will do, I think? If you wish you may sleep well. Myself I often think that a good bed is wasted on a pair of lovers. They never notice. But she looks tired, the *gosse*; tired and pale. Thou hast been ill lately, my child?"

"Only on the boat, Madame."

"The boat! Ah! Ah! One understands. Will you go up and see the room? Myself I cannot take you; I never climb

these stairs. For five years now I have lived *au rez-de-chaussée*. But my daughter shall take you up. You remember Gabrielle, *petite*? No? Ah, your father would, I think, remember."

She screeched for her daughter, who answered in a deep bellow from the next room and presently joined them, wearing a petticoat and underbodice, protesting angrily that she was just dressing to go out. She was a handsome slattern with small black eyes, a sallow skin, and a sumptuous figure. Teresa seemed to remember her little lascivious mouth, which was almost lost in the ample curves of cheek and chin, but the face which memory recalled was younger, more animated, and framed in cloudy black hair, very different from the short woolly tufts which hung over Gabrielle's brown neck. This, it seemed, was the mother of the intelligent Paul.

Gabrielle greeted Lewis with a spurt of sudden laughter and a brief warmth in her hard eyes, but she refused to recollect anything about Teresa.

"One of Sanger's children," cackled Madame. "A little sister for thy Paul."

"I'm sorry to hear such a poor account of Paul," put in Lewis.

"*Est poitrinaire*," Gabrielle told them indifferently. "What good are his brains to me? He will never earn a sou. Always he will be an expense to us, if he lives. . . ."

And she asked Teresa abruptly if her mother was dead.

"Yes," said Teresa, in an annoyed voice, "and I was born in wedlock."

She felt somehow that Gabrielle had once been a trial to Evelyn and that a little rudeness from Evelyn's children would pass as an expression of loyalty. Madame screeched with laughter and called Teresa a "*type original*."

"Which means," said Lewis severely, as they climbed the stairs behind Gabrielle, "that you are a very rude little girl."

Teresa pinched his arm and murmured an aphorism which she had learned from Aunt May, the wife of Robert Churchill:

"It all goes to show that you can't be too careful."

And they arrived at their lofty bower quite breathless with giggling. Gabrielle threw open the shutters and flounced out of the room, shouting over her shoulder, before she banged the door, that they must come down soon if they wanted food. It was a small dingy room with a large dingy bed in it. Other furniture was hard to find. The strength which had thus far supported Teresa went from her; she sank with a little gasp on the bed, too much exhausted even to take her hat off. Lewis took it off for her, moved to some compunction, and vowing that they should go down directly and get something to eat. Then he began to unpack his bag, strewing things about the room. Soon there were sheets of music everywhere, and these, with the yellow scarf that hung over the end of the bed, made the place look exactly like every other room which had ever belonged to him. To Teresa it was home; she saw in her mind's eye all the funny rooms which they would share and they were all like this one, half smothered in music, with a pair of boots on the mantelpiece and a big, hard, untidy bed. She wanted to tell him about it but instead she discovered that she had said:

"Lewis . . . I do feel so very ill. . . ."

He looked frightened and then said that it was no wonder. She had fasted for nearly twenty-four hours. She would be quite restored by food and a good night's rest. Urgently he demanded that she should agree with him, which she readily did, surprised at herself for having been so plaintive.

"Though I doubt the night's rest," she said. "I wonder if this is really Old Greymalkin's idea of a good bed."

"Old what?"

"Old Greymalkin; the hag downstairs. She made a point of it that this was such a good bed and everything. . . ."

"Did she? It'll be our bridal bed, I suppose, so it's a pity it shouldn't be comfortable. Let me feel it! Oh, Tessa, it's not so bad. I've slept on worse."

"Feels to me more like a stone quarry. But this is a very odd place altogether. I'm surprised at you for bringing me here. Will you look at the stove-piece with that indecent little china ornament next door to a statue of the Sacred Heart! How Uncle Charles would laugh!"

"Would he?"

"I'm sure he would. That's why I do. A year ago I wouldn't have seen the joke of that. I'd have thought it a perfectly natural thing for those two to be side by side. Oh, dear! There's no getting away from it! You can never get quite back."

Lewis was looking round the room, taking it in, with an immense effort of imagination, through the eyes of Uncle Charles. He examined the torn curtains and the flyblown paper and the gas-jet and the incongruous ornaments; finally he looked at Teresa, exhausted but intrepid, stretched upon the bed. He clapped his hand to his head in a sort of seizure and announced:

"Call me a fool! We'll go away to-morrow."

"Dear heart! Why? Are we the wandering Jew?"

"Filthy place!"

"It can't hurt us."

"Can't it, my blessing? I'm not so sure. There must be other places. . . ."

"I think you'll find they all look pretty much the same."

"I ought to have thought . . . it took me so much by surprise when you changed your mind like that, at the last minute. . . . I never thought . . . Tessa!"

"Um?"

"You haven't told me yet, why you did change so suddenly."



"No. And I sha'n't ever tell you."

"Why not?"

"It isn't . . . a suitable subject for people to talk about."

"Dear me!"

He was surprised. He could not imagine the subject which would appal Tessa into silence. He came and sat on the bed beside her and said in a low voice:

"Tell me!"

"Blest if I do."

"Tessa, you must! You must let me have everything . . . now. . . ."

"Not a bit of it. You'll never know; you can keep on guessing till the cows come home, but I won't tell you."

"I don't need to guess. You've got a face like a cinematograph. He who runs may read. I know what it was."

"Bet you don't. . . ."

"Something frightened you."

"Aren't you clever!"

"What was it? I always know when you're frightened; there are two funny little lamps in your eyes, right in the very middle of your eyes, and they light up when you're frightened. I can see them now; you're frightened still. Tessa! Don't hide away from me! Tell me what it is!"

She had twisted herself away from him, and was hiding her tell-tale face in the pillow. But he could see a deep blush spreading over her cheek and the back of her neck. His astonishment grew. What in the world could ever make her blush?

"Are you ashamed of anything?" he demanded sternly.

A muffled voice bade him leave her alone.

"Well, then, look at me!"

She sat up and looked at him, straightfaced and rather indignant, the pink slowly ebbing from her cheeks. He saw

that she had been ashamed, but not for herself. Some one else had been at her. But who? After he had left Chiswick. . . . Oh, it was obvious!

"It was something Florence said," he stated.

"Lewis! Please. . . ."

"Did you have words?"

"I sha'n't tell you."

"And she made you frightened and ashamed? Why can't you tell me?"

"Because . . . women oughtn't to . . . to tell men . . . about each other. . . ."

"I see. Then we'll leave it. But you're an astounding creature, Tessa. You'll listen to Reine's conversation without turning a hair, and yet a genteel person like Florence. . . ."

"Please!"

He laughed. He could quite imagine the sort of thing that Florence had said; it was probably enough to make anybody blush. Whatever it was, he blessed her for it, since it had sent Tessa to him. He went on teasing for a little while, but he did not press the point.

"I don't believe that you really understood half that Reine said," he insisted.

"Perhaps not," she murmured, her cheek against his. "But I know what she thinks. She thinks a funny thing about you and me. She thinks I'm your fancy lady."

"So does Florence, as a matter of fact."

"Does she?" Tessa sheered away from all thought of Florence. "Well, but, Lewis, I've a hard thing to ask you. If I'm not . . . what they think . . . what am I?"

He sat for a long time silent, holding her carefully as though she were something precious and easily broken. Then he said:

"You mean, what would I call you if I wasn't your lover? That's a tight place! Listen! Will this do? I won't . . . I couldn't . . . ever again, in all my life, call any woman

by a name that sounded too hard for you. I would think of any woman that she could be to some man, perhaps, what you are to me."

"That sounds all right. Don't look so worried. I only just wanted to know. It's . . . completely unimportant. . . ."

He had lost himself a little, quite carried away by her passion and the fiery intensity of her mind. Almost he believed himself capable of a love like hers. They sat watching the swift fading of daylight in the sky, while sounds of distant traffic floated up from the street to their high, hidden retreat. He discovered at last that she was very cold; her little fingers, locked in his, were icy, and she shivered so often that he again offered to lend her his muffler. He lit the gas, a bare, noisy jet which threw a green light upon the disorder of the room and turned the window panes from sapphire to black. She looked more wan and frail than ever and he exclaimed:

"You look very mouldy. Come down to supper."

"I couldn't really. I don't want anything. I'm too tired."

"Well, then, I'll go down and bring something up."

And he left her, treading lightly from the room and shutting the door behind him with caution. Outside, in the closeness of the dark landing, the evil of the house seemed to pounce upon him and he was faced with the knowledge that he had brought her there. He would take her away. He groped his way downstairs past shut secret doors, ranging the world in his mind, seeking a suitable shelter for the pair of them. No place offered itself to his imagination. As she had said, all places seemed so very much alike. Their safety lay only in themselves, and she had no doubts about it. Why should she? But for himself it was different; he had not that constant and unswerving love which would shine like a torch in dark, unfriendly places.

He interviewed Gabrielle and induced her, with some bribery, to prepare and bring up a tray of food. He told her that they would be leaving in the morning. Then he started up again, still wrestling with the problem of the future. What in the world was he to do with her? They had, unfortunately, no friend whom they could consult. Nobody appreciated Tessa, unless it might be that old gentleman, her uncle.

Confronted by the idea of Charles Churchill, Lewis became very thoughtful.

He found Teresa upon her feet, struggling with some labour and difficulty to take off her frock. He sat down and buried his face in his hands, trying to clear his mind, still distracted by the lethargy of thought which had disabled him all day. At last he said:

"Suppose I wrote to your uncle. . . ."

"Uncle Charles? What do you want to write to him for?"

"I don't know."

"I'll send your love when I write, shall I?" she jeered.

"Oh! You'll write, will you?"

"I thought I'd send him a picture postcard now and then."

"Well, when you do, tell him. . . ."

"What? Damn these buttons!"

"I must think."

What, indeed, was he to say to Charles? It was more easy to guess what Charles would say to him. And yet Charles was the only person in the world who had a proper value for Tessa.

"It's very stuffy in here," she said suddenly, in a choked little voice.

He told her to open the window. In his mind he had begun a letter to Charles. He was never very good at writing letters. He could not at all plan one that explained the nature of his passion for Charles's niece—a thing so delicate that words seemed to hurt it, a thing so beautiful that it must

somehow be preserved, a thing so strong that nothing in the world could stand in its way.

"I can't open it," said Teresa, who had been tugging at the window. "It's stiff."

"Try at the top," he advised, without looking round.

She stared up at the top, clutching her breast for a moment, where pain was alive and threatening. Then she braced herself for another effort.

Lewis gave it up. There would be no sort of good in writing to Charles. The only result would be a separation; they would come and take her away from him. That was not to be thought of. The alternative was to succumb to Maison Marxse. He wished that Gabrielle would hurry up with that food. Not that he would let her in. This room was Tessa's stronghold. He would go out and fetch the tray in from the landing.

The noise of the flaming gas seemed to have grown very much louder. The room was frighteningly quiet. Teresa had stopped pulling at the window; she had stopped moving. He looked round and saw that she had slipped down on to the floor.

"Have you fainted?" he asked, jumping up.

- She made no reply.

He picked her up and put her on the bed. There was no water in the room, but he found a damp sponge among her things and began anxiously to sponge her face in the hope of bringing her round. Her colour disturbed him. Presently a beam of consciousness returned to her eyes.

"Light the light!" she whispered.

"It's lighted."

- She stared fixedly at the soaring green flame. He began to think that she could not see it.

- "Tessa!" he protested. "Dearest love. . . ."

He went on sponging her face. The hissing of the gas grew

so loud that he could hardly be sure that she breathed. And all day she had been cold.

He heard the tray clinking outside and cried to Gabrielle for help. She opened the door with a bump, pushing the tray in front of her. But when she looked at the bed she exclaimed, and came quickly forward. She put the tray on the floor and came to Lewis and took the sponge away from him.

"What's the good of doing that?" she asked in tones of anger and alarm.

He saw, then, that there was no sort of good in it. His heart's treasure was gone; she had eluded finally both his love and his folly. He became, in an instant, so certain of his loss that he gave up the defenceless thing in his arms to the rude, untender handling of Gabrielle; she could do no harm now to the living Tessa. He stood watching while she made a hasty, indignant examination and at last he explained, stupidly:

"She has got away . . . she's dead. . . ."

"That is evident," agreed Gabrielle. "Still, a doctor must be fetched. I will send Paul."

She hurried off and soon there began to be noises of footsteps, the cries of alarmed people, lower in the house.

Lewis, discovering in his turn that the room was very airless, went to open the window. It would not move and he found a wedge at the top. When he had taken this away the sash slid up easily. He stood holding the wedge in his hand, looking at it and thinking, with a kind of slow amazement, that it had killed Tessa.

The night wind blew in, swaying the dusty curtains, and all the sheets of music on the floor went rustling and flapping like fallen leaves. A chill tempest, it blew over the quiet bed, but it could not wake her. She slept on, where they had flung her down among the pillows, silent, undefeated, young.

Lewis leant far out of the window, as if to hail a departing friend. Down in the street he saw a long, long double row of lamps burning steadily in spite of the gale. People moved like shadows over the bright pavements. Above the houses, very high in the sky, a small, pale moon raced through the clouds as though some enemy pursued her.

## CHAPTER XXIV

FLORENCE had been forced to seek help from the Birnbaums. She had not meant to tell them of her fears when she hurried round to Lexham Gardens in search of Teresa. But Antonia had exclaimed immediately:

"Tessa gone? *Himmel!* I knew they would."

And Jacob said:

"We must follow them. She shall be brought back."

They took it for granted that Lewis and Teresa were gone together. It seemed to Florence as though the whole family had been awaiting this calamity; they must have known of it all the time. And, though they were kind to her and sorry for her, she could not help a certain distrust of them, for she had an idea that their sympathies were upon the other side.

They were, however, quite obviously distressed and anxious. Teresa, they said, must be pursued and recovered. Jacob was sure that they would have gone to Brussels, and Tony suggested that they might be staying with Reine.

"We always do, when we go to Brussels," she explained.

Jacob, who knew Mdme. Marxse by reputation, was inclined to agree with her. He said that he would take the early train upon the following day.

"You?" cried Florence in surprise. "Did you think of going?"

"It is better," he said, "unless your father . . ."

She had not realized that he would take the affair so personally. But he had a good deal of clan feeling. Teresa was Tony's belonging and he was not going to have her lost.

"I must go," said Florence. "I'm responsible."



"I think," he suggested nervously, "that it would be better that I should go. There is no necessity. . . ."

"It's good of you. But she was my charge. I can manage it alone."

"Mrs. Dodd, you must let me come with you. Or your father. But I, perhaps, would be better than he. You do not know these people. You could do nothing with them."

"Reine is an old devil," supplemented Antonia.

Florence did not want him. She loathed the idea of travelling with him. But she saw that she might, indeed, require his help. She really could not present herself at the house of this Mdme. Marxse, clamouring for her husband. It was horrible. She thanked Jacob and compromised by accepting his escort. He grumbled about it to Antonia afterwards, declaring that he could have managed the business and brought Teresa back perfectly well by himself.

"Can't you see," said Antonia, "that she's going after Lewis? She doesn't care in the least what becomes of Tessa. She hates Tessa. But she won't let Lewis go."

"You are wrong," said Jacob positively. "She will leave him after this. She will not, naturally, endure such behaviour. This is the end of that affair."

"Not at all. You think she's proud? She isn't a bit. She'll follow him about anywhere. She won't let Tessa have him, even though everybody knows that he loves Tessa and not her."

"Does he love Tessa? I think he loves nobody but himself. I'm afraid to think what will happen to that little girl."

"They're all right," she insisted comfortably. "They love each other . . . well . . . like we do."

"I see little safety in that," he said rather grimly. "And we are probably going too late. But it is clear that she must be brought back. I wish your cousin did not come, too. She frightens me, that woman. She is always so correct; and I

. . . am not always correct, you understand. What a journey we shall have!"

"Poor Florencel!"

"Why do you pity her? She should not have married him. She is not very young and it is to be supposed that she knew the world. It is all her own fault."

"She was very kind to us last summer."

"To you perhaps. To me she has never been kind. I am a very wicked man! What, I would ask, does she call Lewis? You are mistaken, Tony. She will never forgive him. She must hate him."

"Perhaps. You can hate a person and want them."

He agreed, with a nervous glance at her, not daring to ask what she meant precisely. Always he lost himself when he made an attempt to explore her deeper mind.

The journey proved no better than he had expected. He did his best to be inoffensive to his companion, but his behaviour, when travelling, was too ornate for her taste, and embarrassment did not improve it. Beside her quiet elegance he was monstrously out of place. He handed her in and out of first-class carriages, ordered sumptuous meals, bullied officials, and made himself and his wealth generally intolerable. It was a relief when they got to Brussels.

He selected their hotel, a large, noisy, expensive place which she detested, and left her there while he went to make enquiries after the fugitives. This most odious part of the business was, at least, to be spared her; he would do it all, as he had carried her wraps and tipped the porters.

She sat waiting for him to come back, in a chilly, magnificent bedroom. Her spirits sank as the moments passed; she became the prey of a kind of despairing lassitude. She wondered, miserably, why she had come. Yesterday she had been strained and anxious to be off; all through the night an implacable, goaded imagination had kept her from sleeping.

Now she felt as though nothing mattered. Time pressed no longer. She hardly cared whether they traced Teresa or not. She was sure that they had come too late.

"Why did I come?" she muttered to herself. "I won't see him."

She took off her hat and veil and smoothed her hair. Then she fell to pacing the room, up and down, up and down, while the long minutes dragged. At last she flung herself down on a couch by the window and closed her eyes. Immediately there floated before her that vision which had haunted her mind for forty-eight hours—the dim, chequered pattern of an orchestra and the white bows moving through the air all together. The themes of the Dodd Symphony had run in her head, maddeningly, through all her other distractions. To the memory of its rhythms she had made her preparations for this hurried journey, she had heard it in all the trains and in the Brussels traffic. Now, as she dozed, the music swelled and grew louder, thrilling through her tired brain; the violins took on the sweet, piercing quality of dream sounds; the drums, hammering ominously, frightened her. They grew so loud that she started up. Jacob was knocking at her door, asking if he could speak to her for a moment. She came out, and stood talking to him in the passage.

"Well?" she asked.

He was pale and disordered. Agitation quivered in his large, opulent person and kindly face. He looked past her into the room and asked if he might come in. He said that it was a bad business. She opened her door wider and let him in. Her aversion was so great that she disliked having to do so, despite the unintimate atmosphere of the room.

Once inside he hardly seemed to know what to say. He stood looking at her, tongue-tied and miserable. She asked whether he had found them.

"Yes," he said. "They went to M<sup>de</sup> Marxse."

"Did you see them?"

"I saw Lewis. Mrs. Dodd . . . it is terrible . . . I hardly know how to tell you . . . I . . . She . . ."

"You mean . . . he's ruined her . . . " she helped him.

"She is dead."

He almost shouted it, in the effort to get it said. Florence started away from him, growing very pale, crying out:

"No! Oh, no! Impossible. . . ."

He thought that she would faint, and was relieved, as then he might put an end to a painful interview and summon assistance. But she collected herself and asked, in a low voice:

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"I can't believe it."

"I know! I know! I could not."

"Yesterday! When? After they got here?"

"I think so."

He gave her such details as he had been able to collect. After the first she showed little agitation and a great anxiety to know everything.

"Where is Lewis?" she said at last.

"Here."

"Here?"

"In the vestibule. Downstairs. I thought that perhaps you might wish to see him. Shall I send him away?"

"No. No, don't do that."

She reflected for a moment and then asked:

"Does he . . . does he want to see me?"

"I think so. He has sent a telegram for you this morning."

"Telegraphed for me? Why did he do that?"

It appeared that he had sent for her. He had told Jacob that she would take charge of affairs. There were complications; a doctor had not been summoned until too late and

there would have to be something in the nature of an inquest. Lewis, utterly bewildered by all the responsibilities thrust upon him, had sent for his wife.

"She's been ill for some time," said Florence thoughtfully. "Growing too fast, you know. And you say the crossing was bad. It could easily be accounted for. Did you see her?"

"No. They had taken her away, to the mortuary, I think."

"But Lewis was there?"

"Yes. He hardly knows what he is doing. He says that she belongs to you now."

"And he wired for me this morning? Yes!" she tapped her foot pensively. Then she resumed with energy: "He was quite right. My arriving here to-day will make all the difference. I represent her guardians, if there is any fuss. There's more chance of the thing being hushed up. We could say that they came on ahead . . . This woman, Mdme. Marx, she'll help us out? She'll tell the same story as we do, if we have to invent something to put a good face on it?"

"Reine will swear to anything that keeps her out of trouble with the police," Jacob assured her. "She is half mad with terror. She will be quite easy . . ."

"I'll have to see Lewis," Florence decided. "It's going to be difficult. The whole thing looks so bad. She was under sixteen, you know. The law . . ."

"It depends on you," said Jacob, staring at her curiously. "It is for you to say whether he persuaded her to leave the protection of her friends . . ."

He broke off. He was amazed and a trifle shocked at her composure. He found himself wishing that she would be a little grieved. She seemed to view the business simply in the light of a threatened disgrace. He saw it like that himself, though he was very sorry for his young sister-in-law; his

mind, as he hurried back to the hotel, had been full of uncomfortable possibilities. He had dreaded the scene with Florence, supposing that his shocking news would utterly prostrate her. He had seen himself, the only practical person at hand, dealing with doctors and policemen, and persuading his lofty-minded companion of the necessity for some sort of compromise. But it had seemed so impossible that Reine and Florence could ever be brought to any concerted action. Now, finding it perfectly possible, beholding the young woman no less anxious to avoid a scandal than the old one, meeting cold competency where he had expected distress and indignation, he was relieved but not happy.

She asked him if Lewis was likely to be reasonable, and he said in a lugubrious voice that he did not know. Not to any one, not even to Tony, could he have described the impression which Lewis made upon him. If Florence was showing too little sensibility, Lewis, as usual, was showing too much. Jacob, a plain man, was harassed between them. Florence went on speaking in her quiet, dry voice, mentioning steps that must be taken. How could he describe to her that little, untidy room where Tessa had died, and where Lewis had sat all day, after they took her away, in a dazed and timeless trance among the strewn sheets of music? There had been something in that rigid petrification of grief which frightened Jacob. He said to Florence:

"He should not stay at that place."

"Would he come here, do you think?"

"Perhaps. I believe he will do what he is told."

"Well, then, bring him here. We shall have to stay in Brussels evidently, till this business is settled. I must send for my father. Can you get Lewis a room?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Dodd. Will you see him now?"

She thought not. She did not feel quite prepared, yet,

for that interview. But Jacob was to look after him. And his letters! They had better be taken down; they were on the dressing-table. Jacob went to pick them up and saw beside them several notices of the Dodd Symphony which she had contrived to collect on the preceding day, in spite of its disorganization.

"I suppose he won't have seen those," she said with a slight blush.

"I think not," said Jacob rather grimly. "He left England less than ten hours later."

"Perhaps you'd better take them down then," she suggested.

"*Du lieber allmächtiger Gott!*" thought Jacob as he put them in his pocket and left her. "Perhaps I had better not! All women are wonderful, but this one . . ."

He was not a tactful man and he had a great regard for Press notices, but the civility of showing these to Lewis seemed to him, at the moment, hardly well chosen.

Florence, left to herself, was also a little surprised at her own calm detachment. It was as if she had always foreseen this resolution of events, so instant was her response to the call for prompt thought and action. She sat down and mustered her powers, that she might lay her case before her father, and make him understand that Lewis, now so unexpectedly given back to her, was the most precious thing on earth. She had him completely in her hands, and for the sake of a securer future it was imperative that she should dismiss the past as though it were something irrelevant.

"You'll think I'm hard," she wrote to Charles. "But you must see that I have to be. Try to think of it as I do. Don't be so sorry for her that you forget me. It's not her death but my life that matters. I *cannot* live without him. And I have the future still to think of."

Teresa had had her chance and had lost him. And she had

escaped from life so easily. Florence could not, really, even pretend to pity her, just now. To go on living, to be confronted every day with the necessity of thinking, to look forward into the empty years and make plans for them, to build up upon wrecked love a monument of worthy achievement, this seemed to her a much harder thing.

Jacob, going down, found Lewis in the vestibule, waiting, withdrawn in a secret, shocked meditation, while streams of people pushed past him into the hotel restaurant. He looked as if he had been there for ever. Jacob tapped him on the shoulder and commanded him, with awkward compassion, to come in and have something to eat. They went into the restaurant, where a band was playing and much food was displayed. Jacob, despite the gravity of the occasion and a real pity for the man beside him, could not help brightening up a little. He glanced richly round and a table was at once found for them.

"Your wife," he said to Lewis, "is resting. She will see you later."

Lewis looked at him vaguely and nodded.

"All right," he said.

"She thinks that you had better come to this hotel."

Lewis said all right again and added, as an afterthought, that he had no money. He was given to understand that he need not concern himself on that point. Jacob ordered a meal and they began to eat in silence.

Presently Lewis said:

"Sanger never liked him either."

"Who?" asked Jacob, rather startled.

"Trigorin."

"Trigorin! Oh, yes. We were speaking of him?"

"No." Lewis frowned and explained, with an effort, "They're playing the ballet music from 'Akbar.'"



"Ach! So they are. And Trigorin did the dances. Yes!"

Both men listened to the vigorous measures which, since Sanger's death, had become so popular. Jacob thought that he should produce "Akbar" at one of his places. He began to estimate in his mind the risk and the probable vogue which was just beginning. He thought of the immense volume of work left by Sanger and still unproduced, and exclaimed:

"That man! His influence, as yet, is scarcely felt. He has left so much behind him that is vital!"

Lewid did not hear. He was thinking of Trigorin and had escaped for a moment into the mountain spring. He was breakfasting with the absurd creature in the little inn at Erfurt. He breathed again the heavenly air as the train panted up through the pine woods; he heard the cow bells in the high pastures. And again he teased Trigorin as they steamed across the lake to the landing-stage where Tessa waited. Here the memory turned to present anguish, for at the end of it, as at the end of every thought, lay the discovery of Tessa dead. He had got there before he had quite done smiling at Trigorin on the boat, and Jacob asked what the joke was.

"I was thinking of our loss," he explained. "Tessa . . . I mean . . . loss . . ."

He whispered the word to himself once or twice as though he were trying to get accustomed to it. Jacob, who supposed that he would feel like this himself if Tony were dead, attempted diffident consolation.

"It will pass," he said. "You will forget. Everything, in time, becomes easier. We do not continue to suffer."

"No," responded Lewis.

But he looked rebellious, as though he could not endure the thought that we do not continue to suffer, as though he would have liked to insist that our memories are immutable.

He did in truth detest that pliant, slavish adaptability which enables the human race to survive. He cried out, in a sort of horror, to Jacob:

"I shall forget her."

Certainly he was not showing much disposition to be reasonable. Jacob, remembering the inordinate reasonableness of the lady upstairs, was inclined to sympathize with this mood. Still, he was harassed between them, and he understood how it was that the young Teresa, bewildered by two such monitors, had relinquished the problem.

Sanger's ballet crashed to a final chord, and above the din of plates and knives, the babel of conversation in many languages, there rose up a faint crackle of applause. "Ak-bar" was a favourite number. Jacob sighed heavily and looked with a rare indifference at the red mullet on his plate. He wished himself at home and thought with a little stab, half pleasure and half pain, how Tony, when she heard his news, would sob and cry and turn to him for comfort. She needed him so seldom, and her tears were so beautiful, and it was fitting, in his opinion, that tears should be shed by somebody over this heavy day's work.

NINE ESSAYS  
BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY  
*from "The Romany Stain"*





## A PARIS CROWD

ONE of the delights is that you know no one and no one knows you. That free and solitary passage among multitudes can never quite be attained at home; perhaps only in a foreign city where different language and different aspect of things turn the mind in upon itself for its needed reassurance and composure. There is something divine in the sensation of your secret swim through this human ocean. You carry your own heavy and fragile burden of hopes, anxieties, joys, remorse, and you know that you will not, from *café crème* at breakfast to *café cognac* at midnight, encounter any one who has the faintest concern to share or jostle that curious load. So must the gods have walked among men. And you marvel at those voyagers who hasten to inscribe themselves in the register at the American Express office, to have their names and hotels chronicled by the *Herald*—in short, who so

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readily abandon that most rare and refined of human pleasures, the perfect incognito.

Perhaps the most thrilling crowd in Paris is the crowd in *Père Lachaise*—the crowd of the dead. I wanted specially to see again the monument Aux Morts in its little green ravine. There were some particular graves I should have liked to see, too; but I felt it would be the depth of bad manners to go hunting them out with the aid of a plan. In that perfect democracy of silence only the vulgarest of snobs would be picking and choosing, looking for “famous” tombs. It was a grey drizzling day, the stone-ranked hill was very solitary, and I strolled at random, content (so I found myself rather gruesomely putting it) with the monuments I happened to pass. I will be honest: I had a faint velleity to see the grave of Oscar O’Flaherty Fin-galls Wills Wilde (I believe he is buried there) because any man devoted to publishing has a natural interest in the writer who has caused more bogus *de luxe* sets than any other (except perhaps Maupassant?). I wanted to see if the Epstein sphinx which once caused such a row was finally erected. But I didn’t find it; and was more than compensated by discovering the tall shaft that the City of Paris has put in memory of her municipal workmen—pipe layers, car conductors, electricians, and others—who have lost their lives in the course of duty.

I don’t know (perhaps Sir Thomas Browne or Lord Bacon were the only prowlers who have known) exactly what one feels among these crumbings of mortality. What is our æsthetic of the dust? Is it a small

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and shamed superiority, to be still topside the gravel? or is it even more disgusting self-pity? At any rate, that noble Aux Morts, unspeakably beautiful tableau of human grief and courage, sends one away with the thoughts "of things that thoughts but tenderly touch." What a thrilling suggestion it gives of our poor final dignity. You see the dying as they approach the end: they come crouching, haggard, stooped in weakness and fear; but at the sill they straighten, shakingly brave, to face that shut door. The man, more sullen or more fearful, still hangs his head. But the woman's face is lifted, and her hand is gently on his shoulder.

If one tries to be honest, he has to be cautious to note where genteel sentiment begins to slide into mere self-concern. After an hour or so of rambling, Père Lachaise begins to weigh on the mind, and crush the purest æsthetic. You are no longer, as the excellent phrase is, disinterested. That congregated mob of the dead is jumbled in an order as rigorously fantastic as names in an index. (Why should the man who invented gas-lighting have so much smaller a tomb than Napoleon's generals who adjoin him? But come to think of it, perhaps his real monument is in Lamb's essays.) You begin to feel an uneasiness, and speculate on the words *Concession à Perpétuité* cut in so many stones. Yes, you say, we must all concede to Perpetuity; but in the meantime, where shall we have lunch? If you feel the pricklings of self-pity, I think it sanative to pause on your way out to look at the grave of de Musset, the enchanting poet and wit who was so gorgeously sorry for himself. He asked to have a

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commiserating willow over his tomb; and I noticed that the growth of the tree has made it necessary to cut away part of the stone, removing one of his own poems that he wanted engraved there. There is a kind of hint in this. More loyal than the willow, his dear old sister sits chaired in stone just behind him, faithfully holding a volume of his poems in her lap.

The preceding paragraphs were written three weeks ago, and have been lying here on the table. If the two merry little chambermaids of the Hotel G—— could read English—as I know they can't—I wonder what they would make of them? But perhaps chambermaids in the Latin Quarter are too sagacious to ratiocinate about the guests. They sit in their little pantry at the foot of the stairs and chirp like canaries; and when you come in, both run out (some day some social scientist will explain why French chambermaids always move in pairs), exclaiming excitedly that there was a telephone call from "The Lady at the Ritz." I wish that the best of life were not so inenarrably humorous! I should like to tell you how two telephone calls (you must take my word for it that the incident was excellently innocent) vastly improved my status at the tiny Hotel G——.

But I'm glad the earlier sheets lay unmailed, because my notes on the sense of secret solitude in Paris require supplement. They were written when my wandering had been done mostly in the old streets of the Left Side. I have learned since, pleasantly enough, that along the Avenue de l'Opéra or the Rue de Rivoli one is certain to encounter friends from home. That peculiarly in-



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imate feeling of utter anonymity is very real and precious, but like all human sensations it quickly passes into a new phase. Apart from the chance tangency with friends, whom one may welcome either for merriment or for advice, it is remarkable how quickly the transplanted life puts out its new fibres, makes its unconscious adhesions, begins to think of the old women in the newspaper-kiosk or the man behind the coffee-bar as its natural associates. It is not far wrong to say that two of the most amazing phenomena in Paris are the number of Americans in the region of the Opera, and the number of Chinamen along the Boule' Mich'. For the latter phenomenon I have no explanation, unless they have fled the chop suey restaurants of Upper Broadway. My friend the Old Mandarin (who is here, too) notes that these young Celestials wear the biggest and broadest-brimmed of the black hats, that they talk French fluently, and are greatly esteemed by the girls of the Latin Quarter. Certainly there are enough handsome women in the world to go round, and I am the last to complain: yet some faint residual shred of race instinct causes me a mild surprise when I see a merry young Chinaman with a smart French damsel on each arm. Coming from America, the land of vehement taboos, one is greatly struck by the Parisian freedom from the cruder forms of prejudice. They really seem to dislike no one but their own politicians.

But it is a city, I still feel, uneasy in its inward heart. The statue of the boy offering masks for sale, in the Luxembourg Gardens, is rather symbolic. In his

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string of faces there is not one that is tragic. Doesn't that contradict your notion, a friend says, that Paris is anxious inside?

I don't think so. What is the purpose of a laughing mask?



## BUSSES AND TRAMS

I'VE been cleaning out my pockets, and have thrown away a large collection of the little coloured slips they give you on the busses and trams. The first week I was in Paris I was too timid to go anywhere except in taxis. After that I was more timid still. I understand perfectly how the Marne was won by Paris taxicabs: they have more *élan* than any other vehicles in the world. This last fortnight I've travelled widely in the busses and trolleys, and after a good deal of bashful experiment I've learned their great secret. It happened that every day for two weeks I had to go out to the leafy suburb of Neuilly, where men sit along the river fishing for sardines. The French passion for angling for very small fish is necessitated, I dare say, by the constant demand for *hors d'œuvres*. Every morning I took the same bus at the same corner; to be sure of doing nothing wrong I always sat in the same

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seat and got off at the same place. Yet, always asking the conductor how much I should pay, the fare varied daily. Sometimes as low as sixty centimes, sometimes it ran up to ninety, and oscillated among all the sous between. It was as exciting as following the variations of the franc. Then I learned the etiquette. The conductor takes whatever sum you give him and is content. I struck an average between high and low for the ride from the Panthéon to Champerret. Seventy-five centimes, I concluded, was par. Now I give that amount to the conductor and he seems perfectly happy.

In the trams the same method works. But the problem is even more complicated there, because there are more compartments in which you can ride, and they give you a large assortment of coloured slips. If you want to stand in the middle of the car, where you can smoke, you must be specially careful. When the place gets crowded, and (trying to be polite) you shove over a bit to give someone more room, you may be pursued by the conductor, who will ask you for another sou and hand you a little ticket—"Supplement for a Voyager Who Has Transferred Himself from Second Class to First." One day I incautiously allowed myself to get manœuvred on to the front platform, near the motor-man. It was delightful, I smoked and enjoyed the ride; but meanwhile the car had filled up behind me. I saw my destination approaching and began to work my way back toward the only exit, at the rear. But to do so I had to pass through various sections, and in each one someone took away a sou for transferring myself from one class to another.

## Busses and Trams

I find it harder and harder to know where literature ends and life begins. There was a very interesting remark in an article on Conrad in the *Journal des Débats* the other day; an article by Joseph Aynard, one of the most penetrating comments on Conrad's work that I have seen. "The more a writer has lived," said M. Aynard, "the more his experience has been enriched, provided only that he has not written too much. For experience itself may be deformed by the desire to write about it." But to keep in touch with *belles lettres* I will say that on tram 35 I saw a man reading Frederick Niven's "Justice of the Peace." I was eager to speak to him and tell him I am a faithful adherent of that fine novel; but I reflected that I had no right to alarm him with my private and irrelevant excitements. I followed him half way round the Madeleine, as a kind of tribute, trying to make up my mind as to his nationality. He looked like a Frenchman who had had a Scotch grandmother; he had a little ribbon decoration in his lapel.

Riding in busses and trams does at any rate give one a great deal of the raw material of literature. Literature I once tried to define for myself as an attempt to make life stand still long enough to be looked at. But life must be looked at without its knowing it is being looked at; and the only way to make it seem to stand still is to travel at exactly the same pace it is travelling. I believe that in the trams, where I have seen women suckling babies and young girls promptly giving up their seats to *mutilés de la guerre*, one may pass a little more truly into the bloodstream of Paris than by sitting

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on a cane chair, with an *apéritif* and a blue syphon, dreaming at the pavement. Besides, those silvered globes that hold the napkins are too hypnotic, they put you into a trance. There is a jovial story—perhaps it hasn't been written yet—of an American who pursued a rum omelet round the restaurants of Paris. He had somehow heard of this noble dish and had imagined it as the final blaze and brightness in the realm of food: a confection of whipped phoenix eggs bathed in blue flame. But perhaps because his accent was gross, perhaps because he only knew of the thing as "burning eggs," he never could get it. When he asked for it his waiter would call the head waiter, the head waiter would call the *patron*, and they would confer in perplexity with the woman in the *caisse*. Eventually they would bring him a ham sandwich. But one night, at a restaurant by the Chatelet, the *garçon* understood him. The burning omelet was brought, and he singed his moustache in his haste. But instead of the light and tingling texture he had imagined, a dish combining heat and sweetness and savoury nourishment, the expiring flame yawned over a sort of eau-de-cologne syrup, and the yellow mass underneath was cool and fleshy. The only part of the omelet that was really valuable was the allegory; which he afterward pondered as he used to sit at supper in the little Place de la Sorbonne.

Riding in busses and trams is a part of that immensely valuable process of learning the mechanics of a civilization. The great people of the earth don't have to worry about these things, their credit is good anywhere, taxis and couriers and housekeepers are always waiting. But

## Busses and Trams

the little people have to study the details. How to get a good meal *à prix fixe*, how to move promptly and cheaply from one point to another, how to mail a *pneumatique*, how to get two seats next the windows in a second-class compartment, how to get a check cashed, how to take a bath in a small hotel where there's only one bathroom (and if you slip into the bath without warning any one the pretty chambermaid comes pounding on the door with unintelligible and most irregular verbs)—these exhilarating minutiae are a lively part of the huge comedy. Riding on the back platform of a bus you have gorgeous opportunity for study. You see, in the names of streets and shops, how deeply a sense of fancy—a literary sense, if you like—is ingrained in French character. Think of a tiny toy store called *Aux Délices de l'Age d'Or*; or of the Street of the Frankly Bourgeois, or the Street of the Bad Boys. You see those quaint reverses and reciprocations by which one civilization doffs its hat to another: what *we* call (on Amsterdam Avenue) a French laundry is here, always, an American laundry; and goldenrod is sold on the streets as a rare and precious bloom. One thing, however, no one can learn: why do they mark the doors of bookshops *Entrée Libre*? Are there any bookstores that charge admission?

Even if there were, I fear I should be among the patrons. My dream of adventure would be to go into the shop of the Presses Universitaires, on the Boule' Mich', with an empty suitcase and a bundle of the crisp blue and yellow hundred-franc notes; to fill the bag with new, ink-smelling paper-bound books; hop a taxi for

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(say) the Gare de Lyon, and in a first-class padded compartment (so like a padded cell) ride all day toward Marseilles or Geneva, reading and wondering. One of the first books I should choose would be one they have in the window—"Esquisse d'Une Philosophie de la Dignité Humaine," written by a Belgian professor. A day so spent would produce madness, but it would be a noble end. But the publishers have added a new terror to death. Nowadays, after an author dies, they hire someone to carry on his characters through new books. They have done that with Pollyanna.

It is chiefly in the emergencies of life that you discover what literature is really most helpful. Suppose you are reading to someone in a hospital, would you choose "Ulysses"? I doubt it. I want to pay a word of tribute, years overdue, to a great master of fiction who has never been touted by the Intellectuals; who is certainly as great a magician of pure plot as O. Henry, and whose humour is less marred by temporary and local allusion. Other writers, no greater, have been reissued in *de luxe* editions with resounding prefaces. When will some publisher do what should be done for W. W. Jacobs? I am interested to see they are beginning to translate him into French.





## JULIE

THIS is Julie's afternoon off. At three o'clock the old coachman, with curly white moustaches, clicks the latch of the garden gate. Julie is ready, in her best black apron and the black felt slippers. Her mysterious little packages, treasures accumulated during the past four weeks, are handed up to Monsieur Lecellier with the warning that they are *bien fragiles*. A hat that Titania has given her; some bits of barley sugar and a baby's dress—for the children of her six nephews who own a fishing smack in common; the chintz-covered bottom of a broken trunk tray that has greatly taken her fancy, and the elephant teapot (with his trunk for spout) that Monsieur and Madame brought her from Paris. These, and other small increments, she asks me to inspect, so that I may be assured nothing is

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exported that does not belong to her. I have tried to persuade Julie it is not necessary to ask our permission every time she wants to eat anything. Accustomed to the manners of American servants, the first time Julie asked if I would permit her to take "a morsel of bread with some butter," I thought it was irony. But far from it. Julie cannot eat or drink with relish until she has had specific assent from above for every item. She used to bring her plate into the dining room, asking me to put her food on it for her. But I suppose we have debauched her by our constant cry, "*Toujours, Julie, vous prendrez tout ce qu'il vous faut.*"

The hat that Julie is taking with her will go, presumably, to one of her grand-nieces; for Julie, when she wears anything on her head, carries the white linen coiffe of the region. The elephant teapot, I surmise, will lead a carefully guarded life. "*Voici, Julie,*" said Monsieur and Madame, "*c'est un peu symbolique, cela servira pour vous faire penser de la famille américaine qui était comme un éléphant sur vos mains.*" But it is always dangerous to touch the sentimental note with Julie, to hint at possible partings. With sudden wetness in her fierce blue eyes she vows that she would not dream of using her elephant teapot. "It's sacred," she says. "It's going in a little corner that I know of." To ease the moment one has rapid recourse to stratagem. "*Dans les soirs d'hiver, Julie, vous pourrez prendre votre tilleul dans l'éléphant.*" Julie knows that when *tilleul* is mentioned it is the signal for a laugh. *Tilleul*, a kind of tea made of lime leaves, is her favourite infusion. It smells and tastes like a fragrant hay-

## Julie

loft in summer, and she recommends it for every bodily weakness. Monsieur, however, mocks himself of it. Never mind, she says; in fifteen years you will be glad to have recourse to that good *tilleul*.

She climbs into the carriage, gasping a little as she balances on one foot, and drives proudly away to town, to see her two older sisters and tell the latest news of her strange American *patrons*. Only once a month can Julie be persuaded to take a couple of hours off, and then chiefly because she has to visit her *propriétaire*, to pay the rent of "the little corner she knows of." Her wages mustn't be given her until she is all ready to embark; she might lose them. The small black purse is firmly gripped in that strong, laborious hand. Her fine golden-gray head is grandly erect as Monsieur Lecellier drives to town. Life is rich in comely humours, and it happens that Lecellier is her next-door neighbour in the Rue St. Jean. And to be driven up that cobbled lane, arriving in triumph with her bundles, must be good medicine for many days of distress in a long, hard life. What fun it would be, did manners permit, to follow her and see exactly what happens.

In two hours Julie will be back, and come hurrying over to the nearby *chaumière* (forgetting, in her innocent eagerness, that it is forbidden ground: *c'est là que Monsieur écrit son livre*). She is anxious to see if Monsieur and Madame are still alive and well after two dangerous hours unmastiffed; and to report that her sister has sent a present of three pots of jelly. "*Ce pauvre Monsieur! Il n'a jamais assez de confiture.*"

## The Romany Stain

How can I tell you about Julie? It cannot be done. But since we live by attempting the impossible, I can take a few symptoms of her vivid human decency. Where shall we begin, then? At the very bottom, with her feet.

It is the sound of those valiant feet, their busy shuffle to and fro, that I think of most affectionately. Toward the middle of the afternoon, when the white canvas sandals are discarded for the soft felt slippers, Julie's feet begin to play an important part in the household. An occasional groan is heard. Then it is not amiss to suggest: Julie, you had better repose yourself a few minutes and drink a little *tilleul*. This has to be said rapidly, round the corner of the door, or Julie may want to show them to you. Once I didn't get away fast enough (it is amazing how rapidly she can get started on a conversation) and there they were. "*Ce sont bien propres*," she exclaimed; and indeed they were like ivory. How that does good, she rejoiced, treading them about on the cold stone flags. When one has sixty-four (years, she means) one has *mal aux pieds*. But unless you daily suggest it, Julie will not repose herself even for five minutes. From before six in the morning until after ten at night, those faithful members are on the go. Perhaps it is along the garden paths, where her fury of washing covers every rosebush with blanching linen; perhaps it is on the road to the farm round the corner, where on muddy days her sabots go clopping for eggs and milk.

Let's try the other end of the picture. Julie is a champion talker. She loves noise. Doors close like

## Julie

artillery; plates come down on the table with a crash. Anything done silently rather frightens her: if you open the kitchen door without preliminary voice or footfall, she whoops with alarm. When our tiny *salle à manger* is packed for *déjeuner*—Monsieur and Madame, three children and Mademoiselle—the din is unbelievable. Every dish is placed with commentary and suggestion. Sometimes Julie tries heroically to restrain herself, for occasionally she has a faint surmise that Madame would relish a little less clamour; but then she hears something said (in our atrocious French) that interests her. She puts her adorable old head on one side, lays a finger against her nose, and waits—with all the excitement of a pleading dog—to catch my eye. This rogueish gesture is irresistible. I look up (if I didn't she would leave the room in tears) and she begins to volley foghorns of talk. At last Titania finds an opportunity to ask for the spoons. "*Ah, je vous fais mal de service!*" the good creature exclaims, conscience-smitten. We all hold our breaths, thinking now we are settled for a moment. But the Urchiness takes this opportunity to try a few words of French, and Julie bursts into a shout of applause. "*Ah, qu'elle est jolie, ma petite cocotte adorée, ah qu'elle est mignonne!*" Titania knows, wisely enough, that Julie is not one of those who can be compressed into the rigid mould of conventional domestic service. I only wish it were possible, without offence, to reproduce some of her more excellent ejaculations—on the virtues of stewed figs or (anatomically gestured, on her own person) the dangers of bicycle riding.

## The Romany Stain

How happy an artist would be if he could get Julie on canvas. He'd have to do it while she's shelling the beans outside the kitchen door, almost the only time she could hold a pose. Though I'd like to have her as she's vigorously swinging the lettuce in a little wire basket, shaking the water from the leaves. Her handsome blonde head is bent forward, her strong white forearms flash in the sunlight, she rocks a little on her big haunches. I hope I haven't given an impression of a humble, respectful creature: Julie is a true Norman sea wife, with the stubborn pride and thrift of a rocky coast and the sea wife's horror of storms. "*Fermez bien les portes,*" is her last cry every night as she toils up to the attic. "*Nous aurons du vent. Un triste temps!*" In spite of her horror of frogs (they come hopping into the house every evening, from the garden) she will go out to pick pears in the dark and sit late to cook them, having heard a chance remark that stewed pears would be nice for breakfast. Her merciless tirade can be heard a hundred yards down the road if she imagines that the *épicier* has not given Madame his best and at the lowest price. Yet a word of reproach can fill her with black despair. She is one of those who will suffer anything for love but not raise a hand for coercion.

One who has always known England much better than France finds it specially interesting to see these Norman types so akin to the English in form and spirit. In the very look of their villages one seems to see the knotty cradle from which so much of England sprang.



## PETITES ANNONCES

THERE is inexhaustible fascination in standing in the corridor of a French *rapide*. The railing is exactly the right height to receive one's elbows, the wide windows give a full view, no official ever dreams of enforcing the notice that "*MM. les Voyageurs* are insistentlly besought not to sojourn in the aisle." So one can smoke and ponder, not much disturbed until the little waitress with smartly rouged cheeks comes tingling the bell for luncheon, and starts a file of customers along the narrow passage.

And what a serene pattern of landscape. The fields are striped in silver, green, lemon-yellow or a dull glowing gold in sudden shots of sun; and these various oblongs are stitched together with hedges that seem (as swift movement rocks you into a watchful doze) to hold the whole world together in a mesh. Sprinkles of poppies, stubble combed and trimmed, lines of

## The Romany Stain

poplars by slow rivers, tawny roofs of tile rich in latent colour as a ripe Stilton cheese. They are long, low, stooping roofs, sagged with burden like a donkey's back, but still strong to endure. A woman in a blue dress, bent over her sickle, pauses to watch the train run by.

But the "omnibus" train—or as we would say, accommodation—is even more fun. It is an easy-going caravan; most of the way you are quite likely to have your second-class compartment to yourself; and when lunch time comes you hop out and buy sandwiches, brioches, pears, and a bottle of white wine (with the cork already loosened for you) at a station buffet. I don't quite know how to work Literature into these dispatches: Doctor Canby writes me that I might say something about what people are reading in France: but Literature, at any rate as boiled down and scummed off into little paper bricks, is not much occupying my mind at the moment. If Doctor Canby knew that the Contributing Editor spends his train journeys reading that scurrile journal, *Madame Sans Gêne* (whose short stories are obscene, but as clever as O. Henry for sheer ingenuity), he would certainly dismiss me. But to look at life solely through the refractions of Literature would be as rash as to assess French civilization by the *Petites Annonces* in *Le Sourire*.

Then, when you lay aside your newspapers, and your invaluable Livret-Chaix, you gape out across the wide fields. The russet light of early autumn is on the slopes of stubble, apples are red and heavy in the trees. The



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tan-and-white cows of Normandy, you notice, spend most of their time lying down: exhausted, perhaps, by the continual demand upon them for the "*Véritable Camembert de Normandie*." But the cream-coloured cattle of Burgundy—you can't help remembering Europa and her bull—are on their feet much more. There is the same difference of temper among cathedrals. Chartres is a shrine on tiptoe, leaning and climbing aloft; Bourges is a cathedral sedentary, couched everlastingly upon her restful soil.

In the little train from Dreux to Maintenon, the pane was gone from the tiny window between our compartment and the next. A small boy in the other cell discovered this, and was happy thrusting an umbrella through the aperture. Then I surprised him by blowing a puff of tobacco smoke into *his* compartment. We looked at each other through the hole, and I saw that his sailor cap had a ribbon lettered WILSON. I complimented him on this, told him "*Ça porte bonheur*," and gave him four sous. When he and his mother got off at Ecluzelles, a heavenly hamlet in that Eure valley that is striped so gold and green, he was still talking about it. The *chef de gare* always looks like an admiral in his gold braid. Such a slamming of doors, blowing of whistles, squawking of the absurd departure signal, all the medley of noise, bustle, and miniature importance that the French relish . . . and off we go, *on time*. The fidelity with which even the smallest branch-line trains stick to their schedule puts the Long Island Railroad to shame. They establish a time-table that they know they can keep—and keep it.

## The Romany Stain

One who loves Long Island, by the way, is very much at home in all that central plain. From Chartres to Châteaudun and Blois, across rich sweeps of earth, I could easily imagine myself humming in *Dame Quickly* from, say, Roslyn to Babylon or Bayshore; though the plains of Eure et Loir are lonelier. The spacious emptiness of French landscape is a constant amazement: every inch in that region is under cultivation, yet one sees few hands at work. A curious echo of home is a line of telegraph that goes humming across the country south of Châteaudun. As soon as you see it you recognize something familiar about the shape of the cross-bars and insulators. Yes, the driver says, it was built by the Americans during the war. It goes to Brest, I suppose, and perhaps the name worn by the urchin of Ecluzelles flashed more than once along those copper threads. Beside the road you pass an occasional patch of our Indian corn—not spaced in hills, but all thickly jumbled together, for fodder, I suppose. Yet at the hotel in Châteaudun—which one is quaintly astounded to find owned and run by an American—you can actually order ears of corn for dinner; and though I am no partisan of American dishes when abroad, I must honestly announce it as thrillingly good. Under the very window where I write, corn is put to still another purpose: it grows in the flower garden, among the gay colours of dahlia and zinnia, as a decorative herb, ornamenting an old château. Just so did Ben Franklin, good solid citizen, find himself an aristocrat when he went abroad.

If you are at Châteaudun, you will rise early and go

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out along the road toward Courtalain; and by the 1-kilometer stone you will see a field crossed by a low stone wall. You cannot mistake this wall, for it sparkles with bits of broken glass in all lively colours: green, blue, lilac, yellow, and brown. Over this wall, beyond a vineyard and a valley, you can get your first profile of an absolutely unspoiled château—not a re-decorated trap for tourists like Blois, for instance, but the genuine majesty and cruelty of the Middle Ages. Happily the castles of the Loire (how can I persuade the printer, at such distance, to spell this Loire differently from the earlier one? He will certainly conclude the calamus has lapsed) have been made such an industry that most travellers are wearied out before they reach Châteaudun; and you can enjoy it in lonely peace. The wise are content to say little of their richest trove: I have already said too much. I will only add, to assure Doctor Canby that I am aware of current literature, that in Châteaudun there is a *coiffeur* called Proust.

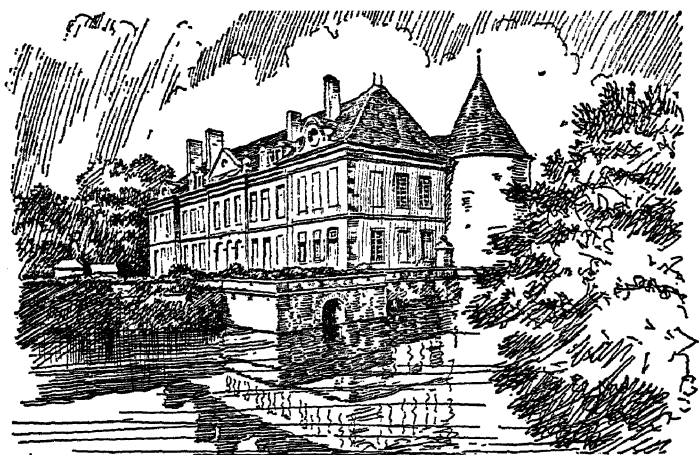
A necessary ingredient of any full experience is terror; I came close to it when M. Battais, one of the caretakers of Chartres cathedral (to whom I had gone provided with secret passwords), instructed me to help him ring the noonday bells. In the roaring cave of that lacy spire, see-sawing on the crossbeam of a bronze monster that seemed as maniac as Victor Hugo's cannon, we sprang and clung. Through the long windows the sunny roofs of Chartres, far below, spun a fantastic rigolo. You grasp an iron bar on the fixed rafter above the great bell. With one foot on the airy scaffold, you put the other on the rocking crossbeam, and begin

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with gently measured shoves. Then, stronger and stronger you bear down, sinking lower each dip as the bronze begins to roll. With a jarring thunder the metal takes voice and comes alive. Farther and farther down you swing, on one foot, until the other leg loses its purchase on the platform. Now, with a wild capering you reel up and down, watching M. Battais in his shirtsleeves and skull cap as he grimly oscillates on the other side. The bell is already making nearly a 180-degree swing; the shaking explosions of sound are bewildering; you begin to wonder if it is his intention to make it go all the way round? For you didn't catch any too clearly just what he had told you, in French, to do next—except to hold on tight. You meditate sadly, as you bound on and off the flying beam, that the spire is centuries old, and that this appalling vibration is enough to burst the silver-grey stones asunder. To-day, to-day evidently, is the final moment when disintegration is due. How startled Titania will be, calmly sitting at the Grand Monarque inn, to hear the crash; and you yourself to be assimilated from fragments of stained glass and lichen. The adorable ironies of life! You came to Chartres, a simple pilgrim, in quest of its solemn peace: and here you ride a mustang bronze, a hundred yards in air, that shouts toward God in a hullabaloo the Seventh Avenue subway never dreamed. Then it is over: you stand wiping your brow among the pinnacles, while M. Battais dislodges a tiny seed pod of yellow gilliflower, growing between the toes of a stone chimera, for you to plant in your garden at home.

## Petites Annonces

I'm sorry I didn't see M. Battais's dog, with whom and a big revolver he sleeps at night in his tiny bedroom hidden among the carved screenery around the choir. There must be good sleeping in that little cavern, and when there is a moon—or better still, he assured me, a thunderstorm, with flashes of lightning—one can imagine his instants of glamour. There was a creature at the southwest corner of the cathedral, outside, sitting up on his haunches, who looked like a dog, though he had lost his head. Titania believed him to be our old friend Mr. Gissing. If it were so, he might well have lost his head; for I think he would have found the blue he wanted in the west windows at Chartres . . . the colour that embraces everything from a *Petite Annonce* to the Annunciation.



### AN OLD HOUSE IN BURGUNDY

**B**ETWEEN two great rivers that run almost parallel but in opposite directions, there are two hill-ranges, the Morvan and the Côte d'Or. Between these hills there is a tranquil region of upland valleys, rich in ruined castles, where the streams are uncertain whether to decant northward to the Seine, or westward to the Loire, or southeast to the Saône. The cider of Normandy, the yellow wine of Anjou, the purple of Burgundy, here balance as ultimate destiny. It is not only the watershed of France, it is the wineshed. But, however geographers may map it, there is no doubt in the region's own sentiment. It looks toward the Mediterranean and the South. When the Reds of Marseilles marched to Paris, they were nowhere more warmly welcomed than at Saulieu. From the vineyard slopes above Beaune, in clearest weather, Mont Blanc can be seen floating in the sky. So they all say,

## An Old House in Burgundy

at any rate, and so Stendhal and many others have recorded, though it seems astounding: the peak must be 125 miles away. I could only see the pink roads the same dusky pink as the inward staves of a wine-vat; and the church in Beaune that is the shape of a bottle. For when you cross that ridge of the Côte d'Or and come (through a village called Bouze) down vineyard slopes in a hot September sun, you are among the world's most famous grapes. The rapid opening and closing of the straight vistas between vine-rows, as the car spins by, makes the fields change and shimmer like twinkling silk. As you study the wine card at the inn at Beaune you can meditate those historic names: Volnay, Pommard, Corton, Chambertin, Montrachet, Clos-Vougeot . . . Clos-Vougeot to whom one of Napoleon's commanders made his regiment present arms when they marched by. It was another military man (Camille Rodier's great work on *Le Vin de Bourgogne* tells the story) who always drank his burgundies in a glass cheese-bell. For it is the Burgundian theory that wine should be drunk in a vessel large enough to admit both mouth and nose simultaneously. "*Ce n'est évidemment pas très élégant, mais une nouvelle série d'odeurs perçues par les fosses nasales sera le bénéfice,*" says Camille Rodier. The glasses set out by the inn at Beaune are not quite as wide as cheese-bells, but very nearly. I now understand more clearly how it was that Mr. Hamish Miles three times began a letter to me, a year ago, when staying at Beaune; and three times desisted, overcome with sleep. He finished the letter a month later, in London. It was a powerful

## The Romany Stain

letter, and concluded by quoting the wine card of the hotel, where you will find written: "*Ce n'est pas à dire que l'amateur de Bourgogne soit toujours un homme supérieur, mais c'est un être essentiellement perfectible. C'est un humaniste, sinon en substance, du moins en puissance, car on remarquera presque toujours chez lui un souci d'élégance dans l'expression de la pensée, un amour des bonnes lettres, de l'éloquence ou des arts.*"

Yet it was not of wine that I intended to write, but of an old house in Burgundy; an old house lying in that valley just west of the Côte d'Or hills, deep-set in such peaceable calm as only an inland valley can give. I should really call it a château, for such it is; but to the usual American connotation that word is too likely to suggest a place fantastically ornate. I would not mar its perfect sober dignity by a misleading word.

It is curious how hard it is in words to convey the simple serenity of that old house, with its cone-topped towers duplicated in the broad still moat. Nervous and apprehensive as we are, there is something guilty in the way we shrink from describing peace. Dignity and serenity are the words, perhaps. In that roomy building of stone floors and great oaken beams life seems to shine as clear, as rich, as strong, as colour through stained glass or through the dark wines of Aloxe and Savigny that ripen in its cellar. In every plain doorway, in every curve of stone stair or twist of ironwork or slope of mossed tile roof, there is the sense of long tranquillity, decent and friendly and kind. But there is something happier there than mere tranquillity: a feeling of renaissance, of convalescence, as of an old



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loveliness that had fallen into misery and decay, and now finds itself in hands that can support and reënliven it. At the back of the fireplaces, when the blaze is going, you can see the emblem of former seigneurs: a right hand, lifted open, palm outward. A Glad Hand, we can call it, emblem of a beautiful name, Suremain de Saiserey, which sounds as though it meant something like A Sure Hand to Hold. But the surest hand may relax when there are no heirs to carry on.

Sometimes Americans seem the appointed lovers and custodians of European secrets: there was some strange blessing at work when (armed only with a postcard photo from which the name had been cut off) my friend the Caliph ferreted out this old house—which the owners were prepared to sell piecemeal and where poultry was kept in cages on the big stone stair. Looking across the moat on moonlit evenings, where the shadow of 13th-century towers lay black-pointed on the meadow, there was no sound except the splash of wakeful carp. Sitting by candlelight to study 18th-century vellum-bound account books (there was a cowhide trunk full of old records of the house) or hunting up the story of the romantic young poet who loved the château and ran away from home to fight for Poland and died young; or admiring the portrait of the Duchesse de Foix, in a scarlet gown and green-gold mantle, gaily holding a tiny black mask, one knew the old house to be very much alive.

Who shall explain what miracle it is that happens when a man finds just that angle of earth that smiles particularly for him? In the Caliph's face as he

## The Romany Stain

ponders the stone facets of his moat-balustrade, or the hipped gables of his farm buildings, or the curved steps that lead down to his bowling green, or the arch of his alley of lime trees, I see the look of a man at peace with life. Architect by profession, his two or three months a year in this Burgundian retreat are certainly no mere vacancy, but a devotion to the bottom principles and honours of his art; from which he takes back, to his office in an American city, freshened notions of that marriage of Place and Time that we call architecture. And what delightful ironies in the situation, he chuckles. Is it not amusing, he says, that a Scotch-American Presbyterian, brought up to believe (almost) that Papists have horns and hoofs, finds himself seigneur of a Catholic hamlet, with a chapel in his own grounds and a village church under his windows where he must provide for sixty-some masses a year to be performed for his house's ancestors? How is it, he asks, that he feels more at home here than anywhere else in the world—here where he doesn't even understand their language? Like the wise man he is, he says very little to casual acquaintances at home about the house where the welcoming hand shines on the chimneyback. Evasive magic comes to pass when a man's heart takes root, for a few months a year, in a life that is strangely different from his own and yet also strangely blended. It is no mean lesson to have lived, even for a week only, in that old house. One brings away more than memories of licheny stonework rising from a clear mirror of water: a sense that the art of living has sometimes triumphed (and can again) over muddle and dis-

## An Old House in Burgundy

traction; that (as the humorous wine card has it) a lover of these things might even be "an essentially perfectible being." It will be pleasant for the Caliph to think sometimes, in the subway, that a cask of Corton 1919 (the same that we sampled, from a silver tasting-cup, in the dark vaults under a Côte d'Or hillside) is ripening all the long winter months in the cellar beneath the château. He carries the meaning and destiny of that old house deep settled in his mind, like a bottle of good wine.

### II

The little river Serein (so I learn from Mr. H. Warner Allen's book "The Wines of France") divides the vineyards of Chablis, so that the vintages of that region are classified according to whether they ferment on the right or the left bank. It is the same stream which in its infancy makes a clear ring round this old château, on its way toward the Yonne and the Seine.

It is the Serein that idles gently at the foot of this 13th-century stone tower, where a fire burns behind me, lighting up the open hand cast in the iron chimney-back. Suremain de Flammerans was the name of one of the old seigneurs, and his emblem still shines hospitably behind the flames. This queer old painted room, within walls five feet thick, has been unoccupied for generations. We have sounded all the panellings for secret slides—not successfully, alas; though the house has its mysteries, as you shall see. A room with a stone floor, by the way, is ideal as a study; you can throw your matches and ashes where you please, and brush them into the hearth afterward.

## The Romany Stain

The little Serein, moving softly in its stony moat, is one of this place's most perfect charms. The wind stirs it in parallel scribbles that move round the walls as softly as unwritten lines of verse drift in a poet's mind. Loitering on the bridge, in a forenoon of Meursault-coloured sunlight, I heard Luther Conradi playing in the music room. The rippling notes came trembling out into the sweet September air: a glorious cascade of trebles, gay and hasty with a downward-running cadence. At once the melody made me think of a little stream slipping and bending on its way; I imagined the Serein and its contributors tinkling down from Burgundian hillsides; and when I asked Conradi what it was, he said Liszt's *Au Bord d'une Source*. A few nights before, he had been playing this composition before going to bed. He woke just before dawn and heard someone in the music room (next his chamber) playing it again. He sat up in bed amazed at the charm and sureness of touch; and then, to his astonishment, the music rippled on to a new and singularly beautiful ending, different from the composer's. In the spell of half-sleep he thought it must be a dream, and lay down again. But the next morning two others, sleeping at opposite ends of the house, said they had heard music during the night. I have heard him play that new ending of the piece as he heard it in the darkness; it is quite different from Liszt's and not less beautiful. It has a curious upward striving, as though the rivulet were trying to flow backward to its unvexed origin.

It is the little Serein, bending round the château, that seems the *motif* of whatever secret music lingers

## An Old House in Burgundy

here in unmeasurable vibrations of air. The circle of water binds it in, sets it delicately apart, isolates it with such careful artifice. A tiny stream, so easily crossed: it is really but a few feet of water but its reflections are so deep! It is a great artist, the Serein: it knows that the way to savour a great silence is to have just a little sound; so at night, through open windows, you can hear it whispering past its overflow; on its way, past meadows and white cattle, toward larger destinies. Here it is like the daily mind of man—shallow itself, but it can mirror the pictures of great things.

Silence is a great part of the life the Serein here encloses. A peacefulness so profound that one wants to retard every slow moment and see it from both sides. Within and without, an old domain like this is a work of art, an art so deeply established that it collaborates with the supreme artfulness of Nature. Nature has the vague impulse, the push; man merely provides the rhyme-scheme, the ABBA. In the oddest variety everything here suggests artistic parables. On a sunny morning the shadow of this tower falls definite and dark across the brown moat. The carp, in a thick cluster, shoal to and fro exactly along the line of that shadow, keeping to the darker side. Is that not art? When the church bell rings, or a clock strikes, it seems always to fall upon the ear exactly at the right moment, at the instant when the apprehensions needed it. The wine stacked in bins in the cellar, to lie there cool and obscure, for years to come—the act of placing it has a ritual gravity. And brought upstairs in its little basket, like a baby in a bassinette, carefully horizontal, a bottle of

## The Romany Stain

Musigny or Corton-Grancey has the full righteousness of colour, bouquet, and *goût* that make it as perfect in its own realm as an ode by Keats. There is no tariff in these matters. Perfection costs whatever you have to pay for it. Indeed the exhalation rising from a wine like Musigny, the ghost of the grape rising in the clear half-empty crater of those vast goblets, is so divine that it would seem the supreme act of connoisseurship simply to relish it in the nostrils and never taste it at all. Nor is it wise to taste rich Burgundies too continuously; the Subscriber in Waterbury who reproached me for an interest in such matters may console himself with the linguistic reflection that *goût* is easily transformed into gout.

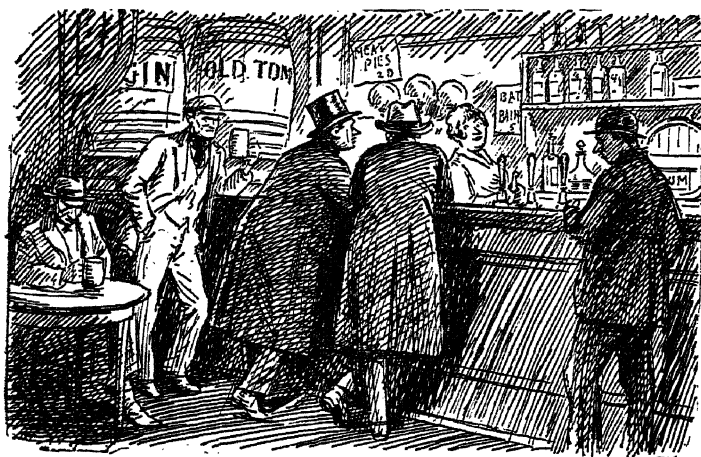
I think I had forgotten to tell you about Burgundian clocks, which are amusing. The nearer one gets to Switzerland, I have always observed, the more people are interested in clocks. Perhaps that is because the Swiss, placed by Nature so near eternity, find earthly divisions of Time all the more precious. America invented the alarm clock, which rouses man to his work, and the time clock which keeps him at it. The Burgundian, taking it for granted that a solid citizen is for a large part of his time engrossed in the distractions of the table, conceived the idea of a clock that would strike the hour twice, to make sure of your noticing it correctly. The first time, while you are toying or gossiping, the clock strikes at random, anything at all, perhaps exactly, perhaps not. But then, a couple of minutes later, when your attention has been called to the fact that another hour has ticked, the number is correctly clanged. Such is a Burgundian clock.

## An Old House in Burgundy

But the thought that the Serein and I were pursuing was that everything here seems (as a printer would say) *justified*: aligned and accurately imposed upon some underlying norm. When Conradi was playing the other evening, I sat near to watch his hands: it seemed impossible that they should err. The musician playing a difficult composition, he said, is always singing it in his mind. In the same way, in rare coalitions of circumstance, some subconscious spirit of just and fine living seems to be singing the complicated counterpoint of our existence. With it all, unless I misconceive the spirit of an old house, one is pervaded now and then by a delightful enchanted sadness. But the Serein has its gaieties too; and Conradi and I are meditating a Moating Song—a form of nautical ballad not yet achieved, I think.

Returning to France revives in the poet, who has not written verse for a longish time, an eagerness to put his notions in rhyme. In the train from Granville to Paris, and again from Paris toward Dijon, the measured charm of those countrysides, the reddening orchards, white curly roads, neatly shaven plains and stripy hillsides, silver-grey hamlets and the blue curves of the Yonne and aisles of poplar trees, all seemed to suggest and require the old French forms of verse. In the balade or rondeau the singer spreads his thoughts with the simple orderliness of a peasant sunning linen on a hedge.

And this evening we are going, quixotically, to tilt some Moulin-à-Vent. As one might write on a picture postcard: We are having an uncorking time.



## A LETTER TO HENRY

CHESTERTON once said, my dear Henry, that though the British Empire had discovered almost everything else it had never discovered England. Perhaps indeed it is the Americans—some Americans—who are most likely to discover it: for we bring to it so healthy an appetite for just those viands that are the blood and gravy of English feeling. At home, often, our minds are stuffed rather than fed.

You begin to discover England when you get aboard the boat train at the Gare du Nord. Those voices: how adorably indescriptibly odd to the American ear! It is, seemingly, your own tongue, for (to your surprise, after months in France) you find you can understand the fragments you overhear; yet it is said in the most delicious lifting and softness of intonation. As differ-



## A Letter to Henry

ent from our lingo as English grass from American grass. Then, when you go into the wagon restaurant for a cup of tea, you find that the French (with their divine and erring courtesy) have tried to make their guests at home. There are little pots of marmalade on the tables, and platters of what the Company of Wagon-Lits fondly believes to be toast. And even slices of "plum cake." The other day in Paris a pink-cheeked little English flapper sat next to Titania and me at Smith's tea-room, over the bookshop, Rue de Rivoli, and had a thoroughly girlish snack: ice-cream with buttered toast. Then she called for "A slice of plum cake," and I knew that England wasn't far away. The fields of the Somme were won, not on the playgrounds of Eton, but in the tea-rooms of J. Lyons. You've heard of British Lyons. I can't quite make you understand why that pretty child (her name, I think, was Kathleen) asking for "plum cake" was to me a whole essay on European history.

On the deck of the cross-channel steamer *Riviera*, Boulogne to Folkestone. Is there anything more exciting than seeing, from mid-stream, a dark wet night, the lights of France and England simultaneously? All those lighthouses twinkling away like drugstores on both sides of a wide street. France seems to have the best of it: the light at Gris-Nez is brightest of all. "Do you know, sir," said the charmingly polite English passport officer, questioning me in the smokeroom, "you're positively the first American I've ever met without a middle initial." Only the non-British have to be passported on the boat: there were a few French,

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several Americans, and a little Jap giggling to everyone with almost hysterical friendliness. The Englishmen were mostly at the bar, ordering "a small Bass."

What a day, my ancient! At 5:30 of a cold rainy morning, coffee on the far western coast of Normandy. At midday, filet of sole and a bottle of Aloxe-Corton with the Caliph at Marguery's in Paris. Passing through Amiens and Abbéville, that dark devastation which the Wagon-Lits stewards deem tea. In the second-class compartment from Folkestone to Victoria, "a small Bass," while I read in an evening paper, with shame, an American playwright's article explaining why he thinks that a million people should see his play, just opened in London. I had Proust's "Les Plaisirs et les Jours" in my pocket, but I can't read real things while travelling in unfamiliar scenes. I am too nervously and miserably happy. At Victoria I was met by a young kinsman who insisted on coffee and liqueurs. Then the 11:30 train to the moist and fragrant darkness of Surrey. Arriving at Effingham, opposite the Plough Inn there is a little old cottage buried among hollyhocks and cabbages. Lovelace once lived there, they tell me. Beer and books were waiting. How does one sleep, at 1:30 A. M., after a day like that? But I found there the latest issue of the *Saturday Review*, and took it to bed, by candlelight, in a tiny cupboard-bedroom where you lie with your feet almost out of the little leaded window. I was just dozing off when I found that your compositor had turned my "inenarrably" into "inerrantly." This made me so peevish it woke me up again. I had to turn to the

## A Letter to Henry

editorial, dealing, as usual, with the Future of American Literature.

When I woke up, the soft September drizzle was pearlying the hollyhocks and cabbages. It's lucky, by the way, that Yorkshire pudding doesn't grow on a bush: one would be given it at every meal. But this was my first morning in England for eleven years, my Henry; and I was going to have bacon and tea. I often wondered why Edna Ferber went out of her way to poop off at English bacon in "So Big." I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Another matter that pleased me, I meant to mention it before, I was reading David Garnett's "Man in the Zoo" in bed in the hotel in Cherbourg, last June, when I found him mentioning "Cooper's Oxford Marmalade." I knew then that it was a good book. Garnett and the Bowling Green, I think, are the only two attempts to get Cooper's Marmalade into literature.

A little later I was in a taxi, on my way to Cavendish Square. I passed some park or other—let's say it was St. James's: I haven't yet recovered my London geography—and something hit me, so hard that I felt ill in my bowels. It was my love for London. I know that good manners impel one to apologize for loving things. What I'm getting at, old magistrate, is this: don't worry too much about the Future of American Literature. It will come along all right, as any kind of art comes along, when we love things enough. Which doesn't mean blurbing about them, but trying to enter into their secret perils and meanings. And as that dear man H. M. Tomlinson says, when you talk to

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him about these matters and his face lights up vaguely and he murmurs the rich prose of his mind in a soft crooning whisper, "My God," he says, "you've had Whitman and Melville and Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Isn't that enough for a century or so?"

When we love things with the terrible shuddering love of Emily Dickinson for her Amherst garden, for instance, literature happens—or else silence. There are a lot of dangerously smart people turning out the New Palaver on our side, with tongue in both cheeks at once. George Gissing would say that we haven't starved enough. I should say we haven't yearned quite enough.

But London, I repeat (you must allow a little lunacy to one coming back after eleven wild years) makes me wamble with love and terror. Paris, divine though she is, seems to fade out and grow dim. Is it because London is so much less eloquent that she seems to have much more to say? That is literally it; and it is the unsaid things that concern literature. You know the type of Englishman who means most to our hearts: the man with whom it is difficult to communicate, but easy to commune.

And one of the loveliest things about London is, she brings me so much nearer to New York—the only city where I find my own dangerous peace. My heart is blithe to think of our polyglot skyline of insanity. And with all our sins, we have never quite been complacent about her, as some of our friends here are complacent about the London we love as much as they.

All this, you see, has been for me not discovery but

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verification. It is strangely mixed up with thoughts of a man who really did discover England, and as I came through Kent in the dark I thought how much poorer England is since he sailed. Of course, I mean Conrad. It is strange to think of the incredible wealth of that mind, its memories and brooded insights upon men, its nobly just division of love and scorn, its lonely affectionate simpleness, lost to us for always. Even his gravestone, they tell me, carries his Polish name. When the English think about Conrad, it will make them very generous toward "foreigners"—even to Americans, who have not the charm of real foreigners. But they are already more generous to us than we deserve.

I was passing by the Museum Tavern—opposite the British Museum—just as they unbarred the door for the noon opening (it is Sunday). I went in, and drinking a tall one of shandygaff and admiring a pink section of ham and a vast slab of cheese (there's something rather good about ham in Amy Lowell's poem about England) which would have done you good to consider, I pondered how to write to you as you deserve. Don't let the too-easy critics wear out their fingers pointing to the scenery, as the excellent phrase is. Literature comes where and when you're not looking for it. Some day, just as some strange shabby bird is passing by, the pub door of Helicon will be unbarred and a Ganymede in shirtsleeves with foam on his moustache will beckon him in.



## REWARDS—AND FAIRIES

THE Manchester *Guardian's* London correspondent tells a story of a young officer commanding a machine-gun outpost. He was cut off from his own lines in one of the German pushes, and the last words that came over the 'phone were: "All done in except the sergeant and me. Four rounds of ammunition left, but the gun's jammed. Don't expect anything showy."

You won't expect anything showy from the Green in regard to its brief adventures in England. Particularly not from this quiet room in King's Bench Walk. I sit in a friend's chambers in the Inner Temple, looking out toward the winged horse on the spire of the Hall. My host himself, one of a family whose genius consists of intuition without exclamation, is a master of shrewd statement—not so much understatement

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as innerstatement. I don't know whether you saw his description (in the *Guardian*) of Conrad's funeral: of the strange feelings caused by the cortège which moved through a town dripping with flags (it was Canterbury's annual festival week) so that the colours J. C. had honoured almost touched the hearse as it passed; and how the coffin was lowered into clean whiteness, the graveyard being on Kentish chalk. Those are the things that my host sees, and sends nightly over the wire to Manchester, to the paper that many of us have always believed one of the few really great journals.

So the courts and buildings of the Temple justly move one toward a decency of thrifty words. There is nothing showy about the stone behind the church with the plain words "Here lies Oliver Goldsmith." The porter with his top hat, the under porter in his brown and yellow robe, are perhaps a little more spectacular, but they have their dignity too. In the building where Lamb was born there is a broken window pane, which report ascribes to some humourist with a pea-shooter who besieged Sinclair Lewis there when Lewis was working on "Martin Arrowsmith." Perhaps the pane has been left unmended as a delicate tribute to American literature. That would be like the Temple's gracious and humorous ways. The only accent of doubt that I have heard was in the gently questioning voice of H. M. T., with whom I went prowling an afternoon. We visited All Hallows, Barking (a church where Mr. Gissing would have gladly been lay reader), and admired the Thames-side pubs

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and warehouses of Wapping and Stepney. We couldn't enter the Turk's Head (run by a Mr. Gulliver) or the Town of Ramsgate or other famous inns, as they are closed in the afternoon; but we poked about the old docks where Conrad used to tie up; and then H. M. T. said suddenly, "What does one of your professors mean when he says Miss So-and-so's books 'reek with cerebation'?"

Perhaps the best thing written about England lately is Karel Capek's delicious series of articles in—yes, again—the Manchester *Guardian*, called "How It Feels to Be in England." Capek, of course, has the advantage of being a real foreigner; what, among us, would be esteemed too lavish sentiment, seems in a foreign voice delightful, subtle naïveté. At any rate, he has put down, and illustrated with quaint drawings, the soft disturbances of his mind, the things we all feel—such as the beauty of London policemen, the honourable silence of club rooms, the domed shrubbiness of English trees, the strongly satisfying bulk of English food. These thrillingly perceptive memoranda of his will surely (I hope) be published in book form, for we cannot have too much of that sort of thing. Most visitors succumb to the comfortable grace of England and accept it; but Capek, with the poet's trouble in his mind, has tried to peer into that grace and see that she is enchanting because she is really bewitched. Here more than anywhere, I suppose, it was really doubtful whether men or fairies should have empire. By this time, some of the elves have been smoked out, yet I saw two goblins last night—two little misshapen



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costers, a man and a woman, dancing in the Strand. The man in his tweed cap, the girl, a lumpish bundle of skirts, footed it on the pavement in a kind of fiercely solemn reel, and no one seemed to pay any heed. And on a dockbridge in Wapping we saw a group of old Jewish women gathered about a still older one who was reading some Oriental scriptures aloud. She droned and keened in a wailing chant, an ecstasy of despair; the others huddled round her and wiped their eyes as they listened. The scene of merriment, the scene of penance, both were invasions from some strange world I have not known and can never know—which is what I mean by fairyland. And why, if not to put the fear of the good old English God into the hearts of the fairies, should the Strand churchbells make strange jangle toward twilight on Sundays? There is no one on Fleet Street then but newspaper men; and newspaper men and elves have much in common. It was a newspaper man who left the back door open (in Kensington Gardens) and allowed so many of the fey people to slip in again.

The emblem of strange magic is upon so many things in England. You go to St. Pancras to take a train for Manchester, and you find a beautiful crimson locomotive on which are painted a thistle, a rose and a dragon's wing. You go sailing on the Thames, in a dinghy, between Chiswick and Barnes, and in the tawny sunsets (sunsets in London, like port wine, are of two kinds: the *tawny* and the *ruby*) a factory chimney is sending up a plume of lavender-coloured smoke. And in Manchester itself, there is a man who polishes

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the brass nameplate of a big clothing store—or should I say a “draper’s shop”? He has moustaches that spike out six inches on each side, gummed and stiffened so that birds could perch on them. He will tell you, if you admire the clothing dummy in the window, that it was modelled after Carpenter, the Frenchman, and cost a hundred guineas. (I wonder if Georges draws a royalty on his effigies that are so popular in shop windows?) And there is the waiter at the Cheshire Cheese, who brings you a platter saying, “This is our lark pie, sir.” On its back in the platter is a bird lying decently stark, its claws curled up and hooked in its beak. It seems a rather large and gaudy lark, you think—a skylark stained by a Wapping sunset, perhaps—and then you see the creature’s dark ink-drop eye ribaldly conning you. It is the Cheese’s famous parrot: he has been there thirty-eight years, and this is one of his tricks. The same fowl, on Armistice Night, roused to frenzy by the celebration, repeated three hundred times his imitation of a cork being pulled, and fell in a swoon.

Of course, I have not proved it (it cannot be proved) but it seems plain to me that in England the fairies put up a grand struggle before they were beaten; and they have left their mark on their conquerors. A man who has fought with them has strange carvings on his face. I saw Dean Inge, for instance, cutting the steak pudding by candlelight, the night the Pudding Season opened at the Cheshire Cheese. He had a delightfully wry smile as the flashlights kept popping off—the Cheese takes good care that these events get into the illus-

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trated papers—as though some Puck was telling him that Doctor Johnson would have been sorry to find the Cheese so keen for publicity. “Ye oldē flashlyghtē and ye oldē electrick fan,” Mr. Muirhead Bone kept humorously exclaiming as he noted these features of the ancient inn.

England expects every American to do his duty: which is to see, and exult in, those miraculous accidents of beauty that have made her life so precious. To read the names and addresses in the visitors’ book at the Cheshire Cheese, will show you how loyally our docible countrymen obey. But often we find the things that are loveliest flashlit by sudden blazes of innocent irony. It is the fairies who do this: it is their last revenge.

Perhaps, after all, they haven’t really been beaten. I saw Sir James Barrie’s windows lighted above Adelphi Terrace last night: how I should have liked to ask *him*. Certainly, twice, riding in taxies, the driver forgot to start his meter until we were halfway there: that never happened to me before, and argues magic. And in Brixton there is a wine merchant (you can verify this in the London ’phone book) whose name is Christopher Morley.



## A MAP OF LONDON

### I

I'VE just been looking at the map, my precious old map of London which I bought a fine, dark, drizzling evening in November, 1910, at a little shop in Praed Street, near Paddington Station. It's not likely that I shall forget that evening: it was my first foray into London on my own, and perhaps it was all the more cherishable because the liberty was only momentary: for I had to catch the 9:50 back to Oxford—the famous train (if I remember accurately) which was the latest one could take to be back in college before midnight. (Doesn't one still hear those Oxford hansoms jingling through the dark, clashing round the narrow angles of New College Lane?) So I can plainly see Praed Street in foggy darkness, shop windows bright with invitation, and a gigantic commissionaire in uniform outside the door of some music hall or vaudeville theatre (or could

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it have been a movie?). And all these intervening years my map, stoutly backed with muslin and with an ingenious mensurated tape for finding any desired street by an index-number, has been waiting on the bookshelf. It was the first thing I put into my trunk when I came abroad last spring. What fun I would have (I promised myself) re-exploring the scenes of youthful wanders. And then (how delightfully ironical is plain fact) when I actually found myself in London I never had time to open it—except once, hastily, to verify the exact topography of that central trapezoid which is the nub of visitor's London. Oxford Street, Regent Street, Haymarket, Kingsway, and Strand—X'd, like a pair of firemen's suspenders, by Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road.

And now, London being again nothing but a dream, I get out the map and mumble a bit to myself over the places I meant to look at and didn't. I find that I can't even remember the meanings of marks I put on it fourteen years ago. I find a black circle round St. Stephen's Square, Bayswater: I savvy that all right, that's where Elmer Keith and I had lodgings at Christmas, 1910, so cold that we slept in swathes of the *Times* (with the *Literary Supplement* as foot-warmers). And I know what this mark means on Guilford Street, W. C., the most momentous address of my life. But what is this carefully inked blob on Lansdowne Crescent? Did anything exciting happen to me there? I haven't the faintest recollection of it.

What I really got out the map for was to see exactly where is Bessborough Gardens, which I meant to visit

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and didn't. In "A Personal Record," I think, Conrad told us that it was there, in lodgings, that his career as a writer began, while he was waiting for the landlady's daughter to clear away the breakfast tray. And I can understand the scene perfectly: for it is after breakfast in London lodgings, after tea and bacon and toast, to be precise, when you are lighting your pipe and warming the slack of your breeks at a minuscule warmth of coals, that one can feel most easily the flowing movement of mind that presages authorship. I hunt out Bessborough Gardens on the map and find it only a little way from the Tate Gallery (where Epstein's bust of Conrad now is) just above Vauxhall Bridge. It is an offshoot of Lupus Street, just the place where a man might begin writing to keep the wolf, from the door. Why didn't I have time to see Lupus Street?

Yet certainly I am not going to brood upon things I didn't reach, when I saw so much more than I deserved or expected. I wish I could remember the name of the genial old hotel (was it in the Commercial Road? or perhaps nearer Aldgate?) that H. M. Tomlinson pointed out to me as a traditional resort of sea-captains. For my own part, I discovered what is not too common in Europe, a comfortable little hotel with not a single American in it but myself, nor did I even see the names of any in the register. There was a parson there with gaiters and an apron: he may even have been a Bishop ("solemnly pursuing his bird," if you remember your "Trivia") or he may have been, like the ecclesiast in Elizabeth's "In the Mountains," someone who expected soon to be a Bishop (*"Il n'est pas un évêque mais*

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*il est presque un*”). When he entered the breakfast room and ordered haddock and grilled kidneys and bacon, and unfolded his *Times* (naturally a solemnifying rite, as it is the Deaths and Marriages that one sees first; and you can’t get to be a Bishop without knowing all sorts of people who are likely to be dead) the scene was as English as Runnymede. For England is different from other countries in that it really *is* exactly as it has been described. I have only one fraud to report, and that is the “mahogany tree” that Thackeray wrote about—the table in the *Punch* office where the thirteen lucky editors sit down for their weekly staff dinner. The board was already laid, with plenty of wine glasses, when I was there, but Ewan Agnew lifted the cloth—and it isn’t mahogany at all, but a fine old slab of soft deal. If it had been mahogany probably they wouldn’t all have carved their initials in it. W. M. T. and E. V. L. are the best carved monograms in the lot. Mark Twain, I believe, remains the only visitor who has dined with the staff: I wonder if they asked him to cut his initials in the board? Certainly he would have enjoyed doing so. Or perhaps he would have said that two thirds of Thackeray’s would be enough for him.

The pubs, as you probably know, shut down at 10:30 in the evening: one wonders what Doctor Johnson would have thought of being ejected from the Cheshire Cheese at that hour? Along Fleet Street one sees none of the all-night lunchrooms that cheer the heart of the late journalist in American cities. The only recourse at that hour is to climb the stairs to a newspaper

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office where a certain editor sits at his desk eager for colloquy. His stuff has all been put on the wire, but he stays till two o'clock or so in case anything should "break." He has comfortable chairs and he gets out the bottle of Scotch. Then, if there are congenial listeners, you may hear him unfold some of the richness of his alert experience. Robert W. Service happened to be in the other armchair the night I heard the story of the cat. I don't identify the editor himself, for it is his pride that in his twenty years on a famous paper his name has only been printed twice, and then by accident.

He came down from Scotland as a youngster, to look for a newspaper job. He tapped at all the doors and found no entry. His small fund of money soon ran out, and he felt himself beaten. There seemed no room for him on Fleet Street, and one night he wrote home asking for money enough to get back to Scotland. He went to the post office to buy a stamp for the fatal letter. On the counter sat a big black cat, comfortably licking her fur. In an idle moment the young man held out the stamp to see if the cat would moisten it for him. She did so, seeming to relish the sweet taste of the gum. He affixed the stamp and was about to drop the letter down the slit——

Then he put the letter back in his pocket, ran to a desk in the corner and then and there wrote a brief story about the Stamp-Licking Cat at the Fleet Street Post Office. How the postal authorities, always solicitous of the public convenience, had laboriously trained the animal to sit on the counter and lick stamps for customers. How the cat was specially



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nourished with a saliva-stimulating diet, and that a project was under way to mingle a little oil of catnip with the government's stamp-gum. And so on.

The first newspaper editor to whom he offered this agreeably preposterous little yarn accepted it with glee. It was the journalistic *coup* of the week. Illustrated papers wired for photos, and the Post Office was crowded with people asking to see the cat. The S. P. C. A. hurried round to see if it was a matter within their jurisdiction. The sale of stamps at that office increased forty per cent. And the author of the story has never since been without a job. It is the story of Dick Whittington over again, you see. I told you, didn't I, that England is all a kind of fairy tale. It is a different cat that my friend has now in his rooms in the Temple; but also perhaps one with magical powers. For when a Zeppelin dropped a bomb in the neighbouring quadrangle . . . it didn't explode.

The most unconscious pathos that I saw in London was a sign in an Oxford Street clothing shop. RAIN-COATS FOR THE HOLIDAYS. (This, remember, was in summer.) And the most eloquent word was the name of the Air Ministry's building in Kingsway—ADASTRAL HOUSE. Which reminds me again of the journalist mentioned above. When the new Bush Building—a terrific loftiness by London standards—was put up at the foot of Kingsway, there was talk of building some living apartments on the roof, and renting them. Our Scot suggested an advertisement to lure possible tenants. "Yes," he said, quoting Stevenson—"Bed in the Bush with stars to see."

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## II

The American's first instinct is that a lively thunder-storm can't be far away. The spires of Wren point strangely pale among the dark jumble of the City, not unlike the white steeples of New England against a coming squall. That soft lilac light, diluted fuscous sunshine (it lies like honey in tranquil Bloomsbury squares) and shadows in a hundred blends and tints, surely they are some barometric omen. He almost pauses to listen, among the steady drum of traffic, for muted jars of thunder. But the air is light and fresh; fragrant, even in October, with almost April sweetness. In the bronzing squares it is a tender country whiff, though spiced always with that faint sharpness of London soot. London smoke, a gladness in the nostril, richest of all fumes to a cognoscenting nose. I recommend the great train-shed of Liverpool Street station at dusk as the perfect place to watch afternoon and evening plight their troth, with Smoke as the officiating spirit. Very sensibly did London choose scarlet as the colour for anything official—uniforms, post-office vans, pillar-boxes. One of our dark green letter boxes would be invisible across a London street. "Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my Chariot of Fire!" cried William Blake. (We heard the organ at Canterbury Cathedral playing Parry's music for those stanzas the other afternoon—not among the "dark Satanic mills" but in the very heart of "England's green and pleasant land." It was good to hear Blake's great madman's voice exulting in the misty close.)

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The Chariot of Fire, along a twilight street, is a post-office van.

A man who has only a few days in London would be very silly to spend much of his time writing about it. Better, for the moment, just to let the mind touch glancingly upon a few visions that seemed, somehow, of an essence. Getting off the channel-steamer at Dover, there was the engine *Sir Bors de Ganis* waiting to take the boat train to Victoria. Somehow a locomotive so named seemed adequate compensation for not having been able to see the chalk cliffs (the fog was too thick). And the train passed through Tonbridge, where I discerned two stations: one called Tonbridge Tub's Hill, the other Tonbridge Bat and Ball. It seemed a just entry into the land that invented sport.

Our first lunch was at Simpson's, off Cheapside, in the famous old Ordinary where the management tries to divert your mind from the amount of fish and eels you have eaten by offering a free meal if you guess the measurements of the cheese. England is surely the only country where fish is eaten three meals a day and again at supper after the theatre. Some enthusiasts even sally out at five o'clock to have a fried fish with their tea. A good deal of cockney wooing is done over platters of fish: the time, the place and the loved one all together. The statue of Britannia should wear a fillet of fish. Another gastronomy quite new to me was lower-case potatoes served in the soup. It was at a dinner where Sir James Barrie was at the board, and the host averred that Barrie had been brought up on potatoes in his soup. We all fell to heartily, hoping

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that the combination might have the same nimbling effect upon our own wits. Then, when the champagne was poured, a wag across the table begged for a potato in his glass. "I was brought up on it," he insisted. Perhaps (it just occurs to me) there is some meaning in the fact that the two greatest essayists England has had were named for food; and the third is half named for drink. All this took place in a room so lined with portraits by Hogarth that occasionally one lifted one's eyes from the table to remember that the painting of (was it?) the Woffington, "dallying and dangerous," was the one that Lamb had described.

The pearly haze that dreams over St. Paul's—the giant gooseberry as James Bone calls it, with the irreverence of a true lover, in his beautiful book "The London Perambulator"—is at least partly the steam of Sausages and Mashed rising from a thousand little taverns approached through narrow passages. There poets sit among barrels meditating their staves. At a few specially favoured places you can precede your sausage with a sublimation of Spain, which cork forests are grown to honour. The most teetotal of wives would hardly reproach her husband if he said he had lunched on Bristol Milk. It is the noblest of sherries. In the Fleet Street aroma there is also, when the breeze sets from Southwark, a rich gust of hops from the warehouses across the river. A blessing on the hop factors; it is their custom that has kept thriving unmarred one of the very last of the old coaching inns, the George in Southwark, only a few steps from the site of Harry Bailly's Tabard. There, in the words of an 18th-century bill still framed

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in the hostess's bar-parlour, customers will find "Beds, wines, spirits and stabling to their perfect satisfaction." The galleries of the inn overlook the yard just as they did when theatrical managers got their first notion from that sort of thing. The site of the Globe playhouse is near by, now built upon by the Barclay and Perkins brewery (a worthy successor; it was that brewery in whose affairs Doctor Johnson was, momentarily, an adviser; his head is still on their bottle-caps). And the Beargarden still runs down toward Bankside. The Three Hours for Lunch Club has established friendly relations with the George of Southwark; and that noble place has already its American reciprocities. Hopkinson Smith did a charming drawing of the coffee room and gave it to Miss Murray, the proprietress; it hangs there, watching the hop merchants playing dominoes after lunch; and on a table in the coffee room I found a much-thumbed copy of O. Henry's "Strictly Business." This was surely a surprise. I pointed it out to H. M. T., who was with us. "O. Henry just about saved some of our lives in the war," he said.

It is amusing to find a tiny Temperance Hotel bravely sandwiched in among the hop-warehouses. And the Club would be remiss if it didn't mention the Riverside Tea Rooms at 49 Bankside, which look cosily out over barges and cranes onto what must be almost the oldest and best view of London, with St. Paul's exactly opposite. It was pleasant to an American eye to find in low-lying Brixton, not far from Little Dorrit's church, the sign *Altitude, Ltd., Steeplejacks*. This was noted on the way to C. Morley and Co., wine merchants.

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Mr. Morley was unfortunately absent, but his affairs were increased by four bottles of moderate port, purchased on the understanding that his first name, as I saw it last year in the telephone book, is Christopher. His assistant believes it to be Charles, but I am still hoping.

Since we've crossed the river to the beginning of the Canterbury trail we may as well go further. Canterbury, of course, is a Pilgrimage; and a pilgrimage is a journey made to some meaning that one feels is greater than one's self. There is a grave in the corner of a quiet, very fragrant ground in Canterbury, where yellow roses are still blooming in October. And there are two people to whom red carnations have a special meaning in London. One of these carnations, worn that day by chance, but crumpled after a long journey, was still in Titania's coat pocket. "Rest after toyle, port after stormy seas," we read on the stone; then, as we turned away, I saw her secretly take the flattened little sweetness from her pocket and put it among the many lovelier flowers on the grave.

James Bone, in that very remarkable book about London, the piety of twenty years' close watching and fine imagining, tells the story of a Cockney in Canada who enlisted for the War. In making out his paper he wrote simply *London* as his birthplace. "London?" said the recruiting officer. "Which London? London, Ontario?" "London, Ontario!" cried the outraged exile. "London, the whole bloody world!"

Yes, that's what it is. To the New Yorker its altitude seems limited; but like the potatoes in Barrie's soup, our hearts were brought up on it long before we were born.



## L'HOMME QUI RIT

**I** HAD felt for a long time that it might happen; now it has. But first I must tell you how time and feeling led up to it. Life is always leading up to things; then—as in this case—you find yourself unprepared, and behave disgracefully.

It is the calm, suspended expectancy of autumn that has something to do with it. Over these coasts there now lingers the yellow quiet of October: as you bicycle softly through villages you smell cider on the air—the air that is so curiously mingled: it feels warm and smells cold; and sliding round a dropping bend you suddenly drift into a whole pool of moist chill. Red and yellow apples are piled in the fields; the eyes of donkeys are more wistful than ever; your wheels pass over little

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prickly mats of flattened chestnut burs—just as they used to in the woods round Haverford, twenty-five years ago, before our chestnut trees all died. Perhaps good American chestnuts, when they die, go to France?

The season of *bains de mer* ended in mid-September, all the visitors are gone, the little town has settled down—after a disastrously wet season—to the long pull through the winter: you see the tradesmen apprehensively getting ready to live on one another. Old Julie, our tumultuous factotum, will shortly go back to her normal life as a fishwife. I wondered why she was so eager to have the Microcosm's baby carriage when we leave. Now the truth is out: she says it will be fine to sell fish in, *pour gagner ma petite vie pendant l'hiver*. But she must be careful to balance the fish in it just right, as we had to the baby, because it's one of those French prams that shut up suddenly into a kind of sandwich.

It's this drowsed and apprehensive sweetness of October that the *bainsdemerists* miss by going back to Paris so early. Perhaps some day you'll go along the hidden leafy road from Donville to Mme. Lebrun-Hecquard's inn A la Rivière at Coudeville; where you can sit at a small yellow table under the passion flower—that strangely Freudian plant—and have whatever *consommation* you prefer. After your port wine (which the French drink *before* dinner, as a kind of cocktail, and very sensible, too), Madame having lit the fire in the little sitting room, you can tackle chicken *en cocotte* bathed in a noble gravy, and an omelet that has somehow inherited just a faint tingle of onion:



## L'Homme Qui Rit

nothing so gross as the pearly bulb itself but the misted maiden tears of a young female onion in distress. It was there, with a bottle of *vin d'Anjou*, that we sat with a poet and his wife and after deploring the lack of reticence in the passion flower, fell upon a discussion of the private life of the Russian aristocracy. We knew a good deal about this, as one of us had employed a governess who had once worked for a Russian grandee: we concluded (about the time the *vin d'Anjou* was finished) that the Russian nobility had led the lives of passion flowers; but that the real reason for their goings-on was that they were a hot-climate race compelled to live in a cold country, and that this had made them mad.

It was when I went back to Madame Hecquard's, some time later, to retrieve my walking stick which I had left there that evening, also a notebook full of memoranda about some phantoms in a book that doesn't get written very fast, that I specially remarked this October vacancy and air of attendance. It is a sober landscape: no flame colours as at home, just a gentle subsidence into pale brown and saffron. But the violets are still in flower, and roses, and big cider casks, stoppered with a twist of straw, creak along the way. Or on these clear nights, on the grass-topped cliffs over the sea, the world is so still that one thinks one might almost arrive at some conclusion and yet turns uneasily away from that lucid sky because of its exquisite lack of meaning. A candy-peel slice of moon drifts down toward the rocks of Chau-sey, there is the heavy rattling crumble of high tide

## The Romany Stain

on the stony strip of upper beach, a mild air with strong grassy sweetness. How (one wonders) did we happen upon this one stretch of uplifted lonely pasture, spread superstitious above sea and bare to the night—just the field that one's mind required? Some day—and as an honorary member of the *Syndicat d'Initiative* of Donville-les-Bains I suppose I should relish the idea—some day people will build upon that field and even imagine they own it: but some of it will be mine, and I and my phantoms will walk there unawares.

Now I am beginning to approach the matter. The soft and ripened solemnities of autumn, the long serenity of lonely sands, these tickled by the jovial absurdities of bilingual ménage, all had long put me in dangerous disequilibrium. That afternoon, it appears, Julie had groaned more than usual. These groans—which are not the expression of any undue torsion of withers, but a combined whistle, sigh, grunt, pant, and hallelujah, accompanied by a roaring sneeze and a gargling of the glottis, are Julie's way of letting the household know that she is on the job. For, if by hazard as much as fifteen minutes have passed without Julie's having an opportunity to talk to someone, she begins to be doubtful of her own existence: she needs reassurance.

I asked the Urchin—who finds Julie a phenomenon as amazingly fascinating as a rainbow or a French locomotive—what Julie was groaning so much about. That's not groaning, he said, she's saying her prayers. I said that I did not think those emanations were exactly prayers, they seemed to me too vehement.

## L'Homme Qui Rit

Oh, yes, they are her prayers, he insisted; she always says something about Jesus after each one.

—You don't know nearly all the funny things that go on in this house, he said presently.

—I'm glad I don't, I said sternly; I know quite enough; it's difficult not to laugh as it is.

—Julie, I said, you had better repose yourself a few moments and take a glass of wine.

—Monsieur, she replied, there isn't any more red wine. (I began to see why the specially rich wave-length of the groans.)

—Eh, well, Julie, take some of the white.

—Monsieur, the white wine takes me with strange drollery in the stomach.

A little later Julie returned to the matter of the small enamel coffee-pot which I bought for five francs and on which her heart is set.

—It is only six days from now, Monsieur, that you will call for your good little coffee and there will be no Julie to bring it all hot.

—Julie, I reply, you are managing my weaknesses; I implore you not to agitate me.

—You will think then, Monsieur, in America, of that poor maiden who will be under the earth for all you know, the poor maiden to whom you gave this jolly small coffee-pot as a souvenir.

—But, Julie, if I give you that coffee-pot (the old rascal has had a carriage load of things given her already) what shall I have as a souvenir of *you*?

More groans in the kitchen, later. This is because Julie knows that to-night we are going over the proprie-

## The Romany Stain

tor's inventory, and the fact that she has broken eight out of the ten coffee-cups will presently be discussed.

She begs us not to put the new ones, just bought for replacement, "in circulation" before we go. "I have," she truly says, "a very *maladroit* hand with cups."

But it was at the dinner table that it happened.

—Julie, these sardines are very good. I've left some for you.

—Monsieur, I adore them. But I can't take any: they lie at the bottom of my stomach for three days.

I could see them lying there; but I got by this corner safely. Then, forgetting she was not in the kitchen, Julie let off another groan. The tiny *salle à manger* vibrated.

—Julie, you groan much this evening.

—Sir, it is my unhappy feet. I have no blemish nowhere (she runs a patting hand over the superb *rondures* of her person) save in my feet. *Ils gonflent*.

It began to come. I couldn't help it. But she misunderstood my preliminary agitations.

*Oui Monsieur, ils gonflent comme ça.* And she seized the end of the bread-loaf to illustrate the size of those members when they *gonflent*.

It came. I laughed. I roared, I rocked, I cackled and wept and shook. The long restraint of months was broken, all Julie's adorable and maddening ways broke like surf on the pebbles of my mind, I caved in. I laughed . . . I laughed as a man laughs when he reads "*L'Ile des Pingouins*." How long is it since I have laughed like that?—Not since the *Saturday Review* was founded.

THE OLD SOAK'S HISTORY  
OF THE WORLD

By DON MARQUIS

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# THE OLD SOAK'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Men Are Not Dessended Off of Monkeys*

WELL, what people want to find out about the history of the world is mostly how people acted at different times and what they et and drunk and thought about, which it is my idea that from the garden of Eden down the present times it has all been about the same.

But the Eighteenth Commandment has come along and things have changed and from the garden of Eden down to to-day is one area, and from now on is another area, with a great gulf fixed, as the Good Book says.

Well, one of the most prominent men in the old days was Sampson he never liked to work none but use to loaf around with his hair long and show how stout he was and as far as taking a drink was concerned it never hurt him none but he would liquor up and slay more Phillippines drunk than one of these here Prohibitionists was ever man enough to do sober.

If you had said to him he was descended off of a monkey he would of beaned you with anything that was handy. And in my histry of the World it will be proved that men is not descended off of monkeys for if so why did not all the monkeys turn into men. You can't get back of the Good Book in them things, and for my part I don't hanker to.

There use to hang around Jake Smith's place a smart alec couisin of his by the name of Hennery Withers and every time this here Hennerey Withers got too much to drink he use to say, Well, then, you tell me now, "Where did Cain get his wife?"

I says to Jake more than oncet, Well you tell Hennery to leave the Good Book alone or I will bean him one of these days with a bottle he is a damn little athyiss, and if there is anything I hate it is a dam little athyiss.

Well, Jake says, you leave him alone Clem, I keep a respectable place and I don't want a word of religion or any other trouble in here or no fuss for they will take away my lisence.

This feller Hennery Withers was proud of being an athyiss. You go and be one I says to him and keep your mouth shut about it and nobody will give a dam but I never saw one of these athyisses yet he didn't want to blah blah it around so the whole town would know it. It made him feel like he was important. He knowed he wasn't worth nothing and he's got to



## *Men Are Not Dessended Off of Monkeys* 3

feel important some faked up way or he wouldn't have no reason to keep on living.

One difference of the old days in the early times of world whose histry I am going to write is that they didn't have no glass bottles, they kept it in jugs and skins which they was bladders I guess like they keep oil and putty in nowadays and they drunk it right out of the jug. Well, I have drunk cider that a way, and oncet I run onto a gang of Scandinavians building a barn and them fellows was drinking equival parts of sweet cider and straight alkohawl mixed right out of a jug and Oh boy! what a head ache you can get out of that stuff.

In Sampson's time they didn't have no alcohawl and it come into the world in recent years, what they had in the old days was wine and liquors.

He says the little foxes spoils the grapes, you can read it in the Good Book, and that made him sore and he went out and caught a hunderd of them foxes and tied all their tales together and set fire to them and turned them loose against the Phillippines.

Well, they finally got him, he married a new wife and she says you gotto cut that hair and he says bob your own and she slipped some nock out drops into his hootch and when he come to he was bob haired and it disturbed his balance.

Afore he got his hair cut when he wanted to set his self for a good lick his hair balanced him like the tale onto a kite, but when his balance was disturbed

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he couldn't set his self for a good lick and finally the enemy got him because he couldn't set him self for a good lick.

They took him and conkered him they bored his eyes out and they says now you gotto go to work.

Work. hell, he says, I won't do it, I never done nothing but drink liquor and fight and run with the women and I won't work.

You can see work was quite a come down to a gent that has always lived free and easy like that, but when they bored his eyes out they hooked him to a kind of a dog churn thing and he had to keep stepping or he would get his heels barked and he had to turn that mill.

But one day he notis his hair is down to his neck again and he says to his self these coots is got a big surprise coming to them some day. If I could get a jug of the old stuff I would show them.

Well, them Phillippines was an unreligious set. On Sundays they would play baseball and go fishing and have big parties. They had some kind of a church, but it wasn't a reg'lar orthydox church, neither Baptis or Methodis nor none of the churches we know about in this country. It was an idle church full of them heathen idles all carved out of elephants tushes and things and on Sundays they would have like a street fair in front of the church so one Sunday they says let us bring out this Sampson to the street fair and make him do stunts and we will

thrown orange peel and tomatoes at him and mebbby eggs that aint so young as they use to be. Well he got some of that grubbage in his face and he fetched one roar like a bull and he pulled that church full of idles down on top of the whole kit and biling of them and they perished.

Offen Jake Smith an me have argued wether he could of licked John Sullivan, and Jake says John would of out boxed him but with the old london prise ring rules Sampson would of licked him.

Well I see John L. oncet in Boston I was into his place and shook the hand that knocked Charlie michell cold.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Never Go To Far With It*

WELL, as I said in my first chapter, they got Sampson, and they get all of them if they go too far with it and one of my moral lessons in penning this histry of the world is never to go too far with it.

These here Prohis has went too far with it, and only time will tell; some day they will get theyre come uppings.

Well, if they was more men that carried there liquor like Sampson done instead of sprawling and yowling all over the side walks and bringing the name of liquor into disgrace and making it a by word in every household they wouldn't of been an excuse for Prohibition.

Too many bad customers use to drink liquor and it was natcheral that liquor got into disgrace on account of the company it kept.

But they was bad customers afore they took to the liquor habit.

And now Jake Smith and Al and all them that kept a nice genteel kind of a bar room has been brought down with their heads in sorrow to the grave all on account of a few bad customers like that.

Leaseaways they would be going in sorrow to the grave only the boot legging line of business held out a welcoming hand to them and snatched them like a branch from the burning.

Well, Sampson when that heathen church full of idles fell onto him passed in his checks and I like to set down his last words but they wasn't any, and we will now pass on in our history of the world to the date and day of Noah.

Well, he had quite a fambly, Noah did, one of them was Shem and he was a Jew and one of them was Ham and he was a darky and one of them was Joffet and it don't say what Joffet was but for the sake of argument I will call him a united brethren and pass on.

No good comes of mixed famblies like that and Noah otto knowed better but in them days a pee-triarch had to get his wives where he could find them for he needed so many and it was natcheral that Noah should raise all them different kinds of children and they wasn't none of these here ku klux klans to say him neigh.

What his dotters was I can't find out; even if it does tell in the first languages it was wrote in I never had time to learn all them languages. Well I lived in the little town of Baycliff L. Island a good many years and run a livery and feed stable and then a gayrage which I sold a couple of years ago to Jake Smith and I never seen anybody there neither school

teachers nor preachers even claimed they could read all them first languages excepting one feller said he was a pyano tooner and he wasn't honest, he run away with Elburt Perkinses wife, she was a Watson afore she married Elburt and all ways kind of wild.

Well them Watsons all had a queer streak into them. Her dad run the printing office and got out the Baycliff Weekly Palladium and once he needed a stone to make up his type on and he sneaks down to the grave yard one night and comes back with a stone and puts it onto a frame with the lettered side down. Well he must of miss judged the location of his graves or something for it was the stone belonged to his own first wife which her dad had put the stone up but Lem Watson didn't care. And his daughter, this Ruby Watson, learnt how to set type and she made it up on that stone for three years and then she felt them letters on the under side and feeled along and found it was her own ma's grave stone she was working on and she threw some lye water into her dad's eyes and married Elburt Perkins. Well, Elburt failed in business on account he couldn't carry his liquor like a man and one day he says to Ruby she would have to go back into her dad's printing office and set type again and then was when she hit him with the stick she stirred the clothes with and took up with this here pyano tooner.

Well, I seen her a few years later in the city and she told me she left that pyano tooner and was then

took up with a human fly feller that clumb up buildings for a living and she was well and happy.

"Mr. Hawley," she says, "a girl's gotto take a chancet."

Well, she took a chancet, and it worked out all right for Ruby and it paid her in the long run to be kind of wild for she had a good time as she went along and she took no back talk from nobody but hit them a lick and walked out when she felt like it and finally she found her own true love, she told me, this here human fly, and she was well and happy when I seen her, and when he fell offen a building and squashed his self he left her well fixed and she is still well and happy all because she always had nerve to take a chance.

Well, one of the morals in this histry of the world I am writing is going to be it is better to take a chance. Mebby you win, mebby you lose, and mebby you would lose anyhow, so you better do what you want to.

All the histry of the old days of the world points to the fact that you better do what you want to as you go along through life for anything you do you're goanto feel later you done wrong and you don't want to care too much of a dam.

Well, I must get back to Noah. He was one of the most promenant men of the early days and a peetryarch and it rained and rained for forty days and forty nights and that old coot was the only one had

sense enough to come in when it rained and take his fambly with him.

Well, into his ark he took all the insects and animals, male and female he took them, along with Shem and Ham and Joffet and his wives and dotters and the waves went down and the flood dribbled away and he was stuck on top of Arrowroot Mountain.

And the first thing he did was to get out of that ark with a spade and he says to Shem, Ham and Joffet to bring him them grape vine slips. I'm gonna have some wine, he says, ef it's my last act.

No sooner said than done, and he set up there on Arrowroot Mountain for five years waiting for that wine to grow, and when the grapes was ready and he made the first batch of wine he calls Shem and Ham and Joffet around him and he says, Sons, everything is all right now, the world has been started again, and been started right, they was a while when I was scared them grapes wasn't gonna juice up the way they otto.

Well, them peetryarchs was great men in the old days and when they wanted a drink they tilted up the jug and took it and ef you had said Prohibition to them they would of beaned you with the jug.



## CHAPTER THREE

### *The Tower of Babble*

WELL, we have got along in the histry of the world down to the tower of babble, which they made up their minds they would build it as high as they could and jump right up offen the top of it into glory hallaloojah.

Well, I always been sorry myself they never got that tower of babble all finished. I would of like to of took a chancet on that myself. How you gonna know wether youer right or wether youer wrong unless you take a chancet now and then. Well, I took a chancet on a lot of that home made hootch myself the last two three years. There was Harvey Seckle and me went out only last week into L. Neland sound to look at Harveys lobster traps and we found three bottles had floated into one of them mebbly pitched overboard in a hurry offen one of them motor boats and the crate got busted up and these here three bottles got throwed into the lobster trap. Well, they wasn't no laybills onto them bottles but anything you find now a days offen the coast of L. Neland in a bottle has mor'n likely got a kick to it so Harvey says what shell we do with them. Great jehossyfah

says I do with them. they ain't but one thing to be did with a bottle these days, take a chancet.

Well, no sooner said then done, I knocked off the neck and it was the finnest skotch I have threw my lip over since the Eighteenth Commandment was handed down.

Well, just for the sake of argument, I figger that tower of babble was a good deal higher than twenty wulwurth bldgs. piled on top of each other. Jake Smith says it don't stand to reason it could of been. Al says how could it be with none of these here constructive tools and deevices they got these days.

Well, in the old days of the world, I says, they had deevices theylongsince forgot about and they perished with them.

Well, for the sake of argument, says Jake Smith, what kind of deevices was they, Clem.

Well I says ef I explaned them to a ignoramuss he would be a ignoramuss still you got to have sience to get wise to them deevices.

Well says Al none of your deevices never worked any Clem.

Of course I says that proves them tower of babblers never worked their deevices either, dont it. Either you gotto believe histry and the good book or you dont believe it and if you dont believe it youer no better than an aythyiss.

I spose you don't believe in them seven wonders of the world neither. Prove them to us says Jake

Smith. Well, I says, if I had my copy of doctor Harter's Almyneck here I would prove them to you all o. k. Well, then, what was they, says Al.

Well, the first one was the pillows of Herkilese I says. What did he do with them says Al. Well, I says, what would he do with them, he slept on them, of course. Well, that's one, says Al, what is the others.

There was the hanging gardens of Babbylon I says. Who was hung in them, says Jake Smith. Ignoramusses, I says.

Well I gotto go back and tell you about this here tower of babble me and Al and Jake Smith was argumenting about that time, it was higher than twenty wulwuth bldgs. on top of each other and it was built by deevices and along about the time it was gitting so high it was dangerus one of these here cherrybims come along and he sets down on the top of it and slicks his fethers and he says gosh this thing is a purty kettle of fish hoity toyty I'll tell the world this is gitting seryus. They wont like this up above he says when they find out about it. I better go tell.

And he went and telled and come back and he says you fellers gotto stop this stuff yuer gitting so high that men is only a little bit below the angles.

Well they give that cheerybim some sass and back talk they says to him faint heart never won fair lady thats the reason we built it.

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Tut tut he says jest for that talk from now on youer fixed so you cant talk to each other a tall.

And they tried it and on account of theyer unrighteousness the gift of tongues had fell onto them from the skies, they found, and one of them was talking English and his own brother would be talking Rooshin and here would be a Swede talking Eyetalyan and here would be an Eyetalyan talking Chinese and none of them ever knowed how they lernt them tongues, it was one of the wonders of the world up to that time, with famblies all broke up and even the same lodge members had a great gulf fixed between them. So if a feller says hustle up with a hod of bricks somebody give him a beem of wood instead and work stopped entirely.

Well that tower of babble stood there for years and years and after a while plants and vines begun to spread over it and it sagged some here and there and big trees grewed onto it and its shape changed considerable and now it is called Hymnayellow Mounting and it is the highest mounting in the world to this day and from that time on the gift of tongues was into the world.

Well, I will pass along in the histry of the old days of the world and come down to this feller Jonah and the whale only it wasn't a whale a tall it was a great fish you go look it up like I done and you wont make any of them cracks about Jonah and the whale but old Capn Rackham that use to be capn of a whale

ship his self and settled here in Baycliff all ways sticks to it she was a whale and he says he seen the same darn whale in the Passific Oshun fer them whales lives he says fer thousands of years. Well, them Rackhams is all liars, more or less.

I remember Liz Rackham use to be about the purtiest girl in town when I was a young feller and I shined up to Liz myself but she was such a liar she would lie needless. Well, you never want to lie needless.

Well I will take this feller Jonah and the big fish up in my next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Jonah, and Jed Hawkins's Wife*

WELL, this feller Jonah I'm a gonna tell you about was quite a feller and the big fish et him and spit him out again and my idear has always been you can take that story or leave it alone but in telling the history of the world I wouldn't feel free to leave it out.

Well, oncet myself right out in L. Ileland sound I ketched a tom cod and ripped him open and there was a minnie in him was still alive, well you either believe that stuff or you don't.

But oncet this feller Hennery Withers I was telling you about was in Jake Smith's place and the dam little athyiss begun to sneer and stick up his nose at that Jonah story and I was drinking some beer for a change and I beans him with the beer stine.

I says I will laugh at that story my self if I want to I can afford to for I got a record as a believer in the good book and I can take it or leave it alone.

But I ain't gonna let no dam little athyiss laugh at that story only its friends got a right to laugh at that story if its enimys laugh at that story I will bean them. That's me.

And Jake Smith says now Clem you got Hennery all bloody all over his mapp he will go home and Maria, she is his wife, will hear he got a lick into my bar room and that will give this place a black eye. How many times I told you fellers not to argy no religions in here and no ruff stuff like that I aim to keep a decent place.

Well this was long afore prohibishin broke out and all them wives setting at home waiting for theyr husbands to come home bunged up is what give liquor a black eye.

What they doant figger on is theyr husbands is nacherally mean little varmint or they wouldn't of got bunged up liquor or no liquor.

Well you cant learn a woman no sense about liquor axcept the women as uses liquor their selves and I never had no use for a woman that drunk liquor.

You can call me narrer minded if you want to but looking back onto the history of the world the lesson to be learnt is that liquor is for men.

You look at Marry queen of scotch, she drinked liquor so much they named some of it after her and well, what was the results.

She finally layed her head onto the block that was the results.

You look at Romio and Julyet, both them girls drinked liquor and how did it end? They layed theyr heads onto the block, thats how it ended.

You look at Queen Elyzabeth and the queen of

France, they both dranked liquor. And how did it end?

They layed their heads under the jilloteen thats how it ended.

When a man comes home feeling a little tired out for mebbby he has smoked too much he doant want a woman thare all lit up and no meel ready what he wants is somebudy to fix him something tasty.

Thare was Lotts wife she looked back she says I wisht I brought along a bottle of that home brew and she turned into a piller of salt right then and thare. Well the good book says oncet you put your hand to the plow you orter not look back.

Theres no uset talking about it liquor is for men and one burning sham at the present day is the fackt more women is drinking than before prohibisin and they orter be onselfish and leef it for the men who knows how to handle it theyr aint any too much for the men. Women been getting selfisher and selfisher since they got the voting balut.

Thare was Jed Hawkins wife that kept the drug store she started in onto some kind of malt extrack when she was nursin her twins and the habit growed and growed onto her.

Jed uset to bring it home to her from the drug store and the first thing he knowed she had another pare of twins and that called for more malt extrack and she went on like that drinking more malt extrack and having twins every oncet in a wile for twelve



years and then Jed says to me one day Clem dam it what do you think has happened up to our house.

What for the sake of argyment I says.

Triplets says Jed.

Great guns Jed I says to what do you impugn it to.

I impugn it to that there malt extrack he says. If I never carried a bottle of that stuff home to Emmy I would be a happy man to-day with a medium size fambly and not made the laffing stock of the Baycliff Weakly Palladium every year when they prints my picture with the motto *Still Doing as Well as Could be Expected*.

Cant you git Emmy to sign the pledge I says.

I asked her to he says and she told me I was a brute to even to sugest taking her malt extrack away from a nursing mother.

Well cheer up I says kind of foolish the way you will to a man's in trouble cheer up the worset is yet to come.

Quadrupeds he says my gawd Clem do you think it will go as fur as quadrupeds and fell into a faint.

Well it all goes to show a woman hadnt orter take up with liquor.

One of the main moral lessons I will take up in my histry of the world is that no woman orter drink liquor.

Well, going back to the old days of the world. I will next take up the Egypshen faroes and the children of Izryel.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Faroes of Egyp*

WELL, about the Egypshen faroes and the children of Isryel. I got no manner of doubt at all they made that rush through the red sea and the water got out of their way, the red sea never had a chancet.

Well, I seen some of them subway rushes in N. York City and I'll tell the world the red sea had to get outter they way.

Well these Egypshen Faroes was a pretty sporty set of fellers for theyer times, they uset to have a kind of animal named the ibex they rode on and they would race these here ibexes up and down the Nile and all the queens and courtesians uset to set on the pallis steps and cheer when them Faroes went racing by on their ibexes. The Faroe of Egyp would race against the Faroe of Missopotamia and the Faroe of Arabya and old Uncle Hiram of Tire and the Faroe of Babbylun would be on hands and we will say for the sake of argyment mebbby king Sol-lomon himself all racing up and down whiping theyre ibexes and all the queens and courtesians waving there pam leef fans and red silk bandannas and some

times they would git these here beehemuths outen the water and hook them to charyots and race and the thunder of the charyots could be heerd from Elfa to Omeega.

Well, they was gay days in Egyp in the old times and lots of compytishion, if one faro says he is gonna have a sepulker the size of a ordenary barn the next faroe says hell that's nothing you watch my smoak mine will be the size of two barns so they put the children of Izryel to work bldg. them sepulkers. And the next Fareo would send for old Uncle Hynam of Tire and say you seen what they done well expense is no objeck you build me a sepulker will lay over all them sepulkers for stile and size.

Well, along come a stingy Fairo and he says he is gonna have the swellest sepulker and it will cost less so he says to the children of Issryel this straw you been putting into the bricks runs up the expenses you leev out the straw. What shall we put in boss says the head child of Isryel.

Hell what do I care what you put in so long as I get the bricks says the faro bite off your finger nails and spit them into the mortar for all I care.

Well says the head child of Isryell that is rough talk boss.

Shave your beerds and put the hair in says this fairo. I'm sick of seeing them long beerds all over Egyp anyhow.

Well says the head child of Izryel them beerds is

our glory from the time of Adam on down through all the Beegats to Izryel himself.

Well just for the sake of argyment says the fairo you shave them beerds and put them into the conkreet mixer or I will nick the beans off the entire children of Izzryel and feed them to the royel ibexes.

Well then for the sake of argyment says the head child of Isryel Fareo or no Fareo doant you start nothing you can't finish.

Well, one word leads to another like that and the head child of Izzryel finanly says well for the sake of argyment you can go to hell us children of Issryel are a gonna beat it away from here.

Fairo he walks back into the paliss mad and he says to the cheef of poleece if you let them children of Izryel get out of this country alive I will hold you and your entier force responsabel pursonly, aye, from Dan to Burrsheeba, this dept. of youns got a shake up coming to it anyhow. How does it come these children of Isryel are gitting so chesty, they talk like they been younionized, how does it come you let them labor younions creap into Egyp. You been letting them eat flesh pots and my strick orders was no child of Izzryel gets anything to eat but yerbs and vegetation. No wonder theyre getting chesty with the incompettance in the poleece dept. You let so much as one child of Izzryel git out of this country and your head will be layd on the block. Just for the sake of argyment now how the hell am I gonna get



*And then Alexander he would say to one of his hinch-  
man, well now for the sake of argyment what did I  
conker last month.*



my sepulker built if that bunch walks out on me. What's the use a-being a faro if you gotto take back talk from that whole Beegat tribe. Here I am a-trying day and night to cut down expenses and give the people of this country the finest sepilker for their king the world ever seen at the lowest prices and a helova lot of thanks I get for it doant I. I never seen such a country for incompettance, mebbby you think you could git along without a faro and it would serve you right if I resined on you.

Well yure majisty says the cheef of poleece these children of Isryel is all spunked up on acct. of them flesh pots I admit it but how you gonna get yure sepulkers built if you doant give them some meat now and then, they do twicet as much work with a goolash under theyer belts now and then, it saves you money in the long run, and then how you gonna keep it away from them. They got jobs as cooks all over Egyp theyre women folks has and theyer bound to carry it home. Right in your own royel palliss these here childern of Isryel got the cooking cunsseshins and everything.

Well whose running Egyp says the faro these here Beegats or me.

I will tell you the guy yure majisty that comes purty nigh to running Egyp says the cheef of poleece. Well who is it says the Fairo.

His names Moses says the cheef of poleece and he's got the second best room in the paliss.

You doant mean that bird my sister picked out of the bulrushes when Dad was Fairo and I was prince of wales do you says the Fairo.

Well for the sake of argyment says the cheef of poleece that is the guy I mean.

Say confidenshal now says the fareo dropping his tone of voice just betwixt us two and not letting it go no further what does people round Egyp say about that bird.

Well yure majisty says the cheef of poleece if I was to tell you what garantee I got I wouldn't be askt to lay my head onto the block.

Spill it says the fareo, cheef, come through with it, you said so much now anyhow its a toss up I woant nick yure bean off myself with my own hands.

Well then yure majisty says the cheef theyer gosips everywhere and for the sake of argyment we will say Egyp is no excepshuns to the rule. You cant stop people talking yure majisty. Go on says the fairo. Well then says the cheef thare has allways been a good deal of talk about that bul rush story nobody doubts she found him there but the question has been who put him thare. The faro he knicked his bean absent minded and the cheef says as he expired I knowed it would end this way but living in this country got to be such a strain I welkim this as a releef I die happy.

The faro went in and put his crown on and sent for



Moses and he says you and the other childern of Isryel are gitting so strong in this country the question is who runs it.

Well faro says Moses we ask nothing better than to leev. The Faro is willing to let them leeve since he has been thinking it over but he's said oncet they can't and he's gotto stick to it. Say he says doant answer me so pert who do you think you are.

Well says Moses I leeve that to the Faro fambly who I am all I know is I been brought up to call you uncle and mebbly that is the reason I call your sister Ant.

Well right here in Baycliff L Ileland I seen skandals start just that way they started about Moses being found into the bull rushes. Probelly that Miss Faro is a nice girl and everything, but the gossups doant care, you cant tell them wise birds anything good of anybudy.

And sometimes theyre right. Theyer was Lou Simpkins said she found a baby into a baskit just the same as Moses and everybudy says Uh! Huh!

Well she might of got away with it too but theyer was a revivul meeting in the church and Lou she got religion and she gits hysterical right in the midst of the revivul meeting and confesses, and says she forgives the Dad of that baskit baby which he was a deekun himself and he was right down onto his marrow bones at the time praying and theyer wasn't nothing else for him to do but to git up and say yes.

it was true he had made one mis step and ask for the prayers of the congregashion for his sins.

Well just afore that he had been going around urging of everybody to repent theyer sins and I guess he felt like he had prayed for rain and got a clowd burst.

Well nobudy orter be condemned for one mis step like that the good books says, live and let live has always been my motto.

One of the moral lessons I am going to bring in to my histry of the world is the lesson you orter live and let live.

Well to get back to the Eypshen faro fambly and the childern of Isryel they had a heluva time getting away from Eyp and this feller Moses led em into the wilderness and led them out again and they crossed the red sea the way I spoke of.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *The Hanging Gardens and Queen Ester*

WELL the world went along a little further and the first thing it knowed thare was trouble again. War busted out between King David and King Sawl. And that wasn't any more than settled till war busted out again between the childern of Issryel and the genteels.

These here genteels had a king they called Nebbykenezzer and he lived in Babbylun, he was the feller built these hanging gardens of Babbylun that was one of the seven wonders of the world.

Well then says Queen Ester now you got them all built who you gonna hang in them.

Well then says the king for the sake of argyment I was thinking of hanging the childern of Isrell in them.

Yure majisty says queen Ester falling onto her knees I got a confeshin to make to you I'm one of them childern of Issrel myself.

Well says the king them hanging gardens is built now and they gotto be used.

Well says Ester the beautiful queen just for the sake of argyment why has it got to be the childern

of Issryel is hung in these here hanging gardens of Babbilun, wouldn't somebody else do just as well.

Well says King Nebbykeneezer one of the laws of the Meads and Persons is oncet you put your hands to the plow you dont dast to look back, I have give out all over the country there is to be a lot of the childern of Ossryel hung in the new hanging gardens and what would the peeple think of theyer king if he broke his plated word I doant dast to break my plated word.

You doant dast says Ester the beautiful queen. Huh! I would be ashamed to be a king and be scared to do what I like. Well all I will say is faint heart never won fair lady.

Ester says the king do you mean by that you would go back on me.

Well your majisty says she I have said I am one of the childern of Issryel myself and if you hang one of them why not hang all of us.

King Nebbykeneezer rended his garments he felt so bad, he doant want to hang her she has all ways been one of his favorit queens. All them old peetry-archs had queens to burn. On the other hand and vise versy he doant want to brake his playted word. I am in a heluva jam he says anything I do is wrong.

My consence tells me I orter hang these childern of Issryel and the beautiful queen Ester with them because it is the law and I have promised my loving people.

On the other hand my morels tells me that it would be wrong to hang the beautiful queen, besides she is some looker where would I get another one like Ester.

Well I been in fixes my self where my consence was pointed one way and my morels was pointed the other way and the more you argue about that with your self the more of a jam you get into and the more puzzled you get.

When I am in that fix I all ways take a few drinks and then a few more drinks and then I wait and see which one floats and which one sinks my morels or my consence. And which ever one floats that is the one I steer by.

Well old king Nebbykeneezer king of the genteels he thinks he will do the same thing.

What ho he says send in the port cullis.

The port cullis come into the royel room and says youre majisty what shall it be.

Port cullis says Nebbykeneezer I suppose prohibishin aint struck my rellum yet.

When it does says the port cullis I will lay my head down on the block.

Well says the king tonight I want a feest a reel feest as would make the faro of Egyp and king Sol-lomun his self jealous some of the old pree war stuff port cullis.

No sooner said than done your majisty says the port cullis.

Well that night there was some feest, it was a feest would make the feest of lentils look like a can of spoiled sammon. And all the queens was theyre and all the corteesyans all sitting onto gold thrones with gold crowns onto theyre heads, even the cuspidores was gold, and all these here hand painted pictures onto the walls like you uset to see in city bar rooms of ladies washing there selves was into gold frames and the music they played was played onto gold horns and gold harps.

Well says the king tossing off a bumper of the old pree war stuff do they hang or doant they hang but one bumper wasnt nothing to a head and a stummick like Nebbykeneezer had, he was a regular feller and if you had told him prohibishin was coming to his rellum he would of took off his crown and jabbed a corner into your eye, he was a reguler peetryarch and knowed how to hold his liquor.

Port cullis he cries out fill them up again I want something that biteth like a sarpint and singeth like an adder, well he kep hard at work and the port cullis kep hard at work and him saying to his self all the time do they hang or doant they hang and along about three in the morning he begun to see more queens and coorteesyans than the traffic would bear and by three therty everybody was under the tabil axcept the king his self and the port cullis.

Port cullis says the king do I see a hand writing onto the wall or is it the pree war stuff.

Yure majisty says the port cullis I been looking at that hand for some time myself afeard to say anything for feer you would think I been drinking.

Well anyhow port cullis says the king we both see it, what does it look like to you it was writing.

The port cullis steddied his self against one corner of the royel throne and he says it is writing Eeeny meeny miney mo.

Well what does that mean says the king.

Well for the sake of argyment says the port cullis I would say it was a riddle.

Well says the king it is the answer to the question I been asking my self, do they hang or doant they hang, and it has come in the shape of a riddle and I aint a lot better off than I was.

Well says the port cullis spose we wake up them sooth stayers over thare and mebbby they can tell what it means. So they throwed some cold wotter onto Shedrak and Mesick and Tobednego and they read that motto onto the wall and they says Yure majisty it is one of them yes and no things, all we can make out of it is something turrible is a gonna happen to you.

Well, the next morning when they come to wake up the king he wasnt in his bed at all, he had been turned into an oxen and he was out in the front yard eating grass.

And so it happened the childern of Issryel was not the first to be hung in the hanging gardens of Babblylin.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Witches, Ancient and Modern*

WELL when king Nebbykeneezer turned into a oxen that-a-way everybody says for the sake of argyment you couldn't call that goof a king no more we will let him beller but doant pay any attention to his belling, as a matter of fact we could say he has resined as king.

Well Ester the beautiful queen had them hanging gardens of Babbylun on her hands and she says it has been pretty well showed they wasnt intended for to hang the childern of Issryel in them and theyr was a bird by the name of Hymen had put the king up to having the childern of Issryel hung in them so she says let him take his own medicine. And this bird Hymen was the first feller ever was hung in the hanging gardens of Babbylun.

First and last thare must of been a good deal of hanging done in them gardens, for looking back on the histry of the old days of the world one of the favor it pass times was having folks hung and asking them to please lay thare head onto the block, when they wasn't burning of them.

Well they was great sports in the early days, if they



got an idear they went right through with it, they uset to burn these here witches weather they done anything mean or not. Well now and then they burn a colored man in this country, but this is a republikin form of government and a man gets burned in a repubblikin form of government can say to his self he is getting burned for something different than in the old witch burning days and it orter be a great comfort to him to realize he is getting burned in a free country and not in one of them old countries where they was kings and tireants all ways burning people.

Well as fur as witches is concerned mebbly they was wiches and mebbly they wasn't. I couldn't say they wasn't and I wouldn't say they was.

All I will say is that when Hennery Withers the dam little athyiss says one day in Jake Smith's bar room theyre aint no sich thing as wiches and any one beleaves in them is suppositious I says to him youer just as suppositious as us beleavers is you dam little athyiss. And I took hold of his ear and I says the good book warns you against wiches and if they wasn't none why would it warn you.

If you doant say they is wiches supposition or no supposition I will twist youre ear off.

Now then says Jake Smith you fellers are at it again, and me trying to keep a decent place, can't you let the wiches alone and quit arguing religion all the time, what the hell is wiches got to do with anything. Have one on the house.

Well no sooner said than done, me letting go of Hennereys ear.

Well old Blindy Macgowan that lived right here in Baycliff L Ileland was purty nigh a wick if they ever was one, she was a widder and clamed to be the 7th dawter of a 7th dawter and when they was a sea fog on so hevy you could of cut it with a knife she uset to wander down to the sound, and she could see through the fog in spite of being blind and she seen every one that had been drowned in L Ileland sound for two hunderd yeers in the fog.

She seen them coming up outen the water and they uset to call to her outen the fog and she would call back to them and her own sons that was drowned would come back to her in the fog she says and it uset to make you feel all over like your foot was a sleep to watch old Widder Blindy talking through the fog and hear the water noises talking back to her and see the streaks of fog when the wind blowed reaching out to her and curling around her.

Well I wouldnt say she was a wick and I wouldn't say she wasn't but if anyone was a gonna dig a well she would wander along blind with a switch into her hands and talk to it and purty soon it would turn over and if you dug where it pointed you got good worter.

She told me oncet in spite of her eyes being blind she had times when she could see without eyes, she says it was the same way as when it is a dark night

and a thunder storm a flash of lightening lights every thing up and in a flash you see the whole country and the trees dancing. She could see some times by them kind of flashes she says.

Well she was run over more than twenty years ago by the first auto truck ever run through Baycliff L Ileland but ten years ago when they opened her grave to move her they wasnt nothing a tall into the coffin.

Well for the sake of argyment, mebbly she was a wich and mebbly she wasn't. But as a matter of fack if she wasn't why wasn't they nothing into her coffin when they opened it, unless the medicles got her to distract.

Well to go back to the early days of the world, the world went along a little further and then trouble broke out with Hannabell and Julius Ceesar.

Well theyer is a country over there called Afriky which you can look up where it lays on the map in your Geeography and this here Hannabell was one of them Afriko-Amuricans. Well right here in L. Ileland in the early days some of them Afriko-Amuricans mixed up with the Shinycook Injuns and I must say it made some mixsture.

Well this here Ceesar was probally the most famous man in histry, he was a promenent citizen and umpire of Rome, the only thing the matter with him was he had gaul stones and uset to have fits from them.

Well then he says too many colored men is creaping

into Rome, what the hell am I umpire of Rome or ain't I.

Well this Hannabell says I am a colored man and an Afriko-Amurican all right but I guess we got some rights.

Well for the sake of argyment says Ceesar you and your gang gits out of Rome or I will lay yure heads onto the block.

Then they went to it and the trubble spread, it spread all over the known world, everybody taking sides, that's the worst of it when you start something between the races.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Ceesar, Hannabell and the Ackles Girl*

WELL Ceesar says to Hannabell, I am umpire of Rome, and you and youer gang gotto clear out. And Hannabell and his Africo-Amuricans says for the sake of argyment you better beat it your self, a colored mans got some rights, what the hell.

Well, right in the middle of Roam was a big bldg. like the museeum called the colloseeum and Ceesar and his gang was in there and Hannabell and his gang made a rush at it and if it hadn't been for some geese they had in there cackling Ceesar would of been took by surprise. Well this collyseeum was one of the seven wonders of the world and some of these here ides was in there, too. One of the sooth stayers says, Ceesar, you better watch out for them ides, they mean no good.

Well it aint in the good book, it is in one of Shakespeer's plays, he says Ceesar never yet seen the ide he was scared of, but one of them by the name of Brutis got him, he nicked him in the neck. Well he was too high stummicked to take advice and one of the morel lessons there is going to be in my

histry of the world is doant be too high stummicked to take advice.

But his ghost come back to the collyseeim to haunt this here Brutis and it comes back there to this day, it is one of the seven wonders of the world the way his ghost comes back there, according to Shakespeer.

Well with rigards to ghosts, I can take them or I can leave them alone. I woant say I beleave in them and at the same time I wont say I aint scared of them.

Right here in Baycliff L Ileland there was a case whare a ghost had a chancet to come back. Elmira Murchison says to Judson Murchison her husband when he was on his death bed, Judson, you come back to me.

Judson he had had a purty hard life of it with Elmira. She was so clean she uset to make him take off his boots and set them on the stoop when he come in the house and he figgers he woant promis.

But she shakes him and scares him and Judson had all ways been afraid of Elmira so finanly he says alright Elmira for the sake of argyment I will come back.

Well after the funeral Elmira left her door open night after night so as Judson's ghost could come back and after a couple of years she give up.

Theyer ain't no ghosts she used to say for if they was ghosts Judson would of come back.

Judson all ways done every thing I told him to do

in the thirty-five yeers of our wedded hapyness. Besides he made me a deth bed promis and Judson wasn't the one to go back on a deth bed promis. So she says I will say there aint no ghosts.

But some folks in Baycliff never rigarded that as settling the matter.

For the sake of argyment Jake Smith says one day, Judson never ment to come back when he promused to, he was awful sick of Elmira and he figgered if he oncet got loose he was loose.

Well I says to Jake would he of lied on his deth bed.

He wasn't scared of the herafter nigh so much as he was of Elmira Jake says.

Al the bartender says mebbly Judson did come back and he got as fur as that open door and he didnt have no boots to take off and he was puzzled how to go in without taking boots off, it was a habit.

Well these ghosts that comes back just to scare peeple I never had any use for. That is a kind of a smart alec thing to do. Like yelling at a kid to scare him. A ghost that does a thing like that is a big boob I will say.

At the same time I aint gonna say theyr aint any ghosts. The Ackleses had a dawter they was kind of shamed of on account of her not being so bright in her elements as some young folks. Well I will say for the sake of argyment her elements had kind of soured in her head. She spilt things considerabul when she et. So they give her a home to live in into

the upper part of the barn next the hay mough and a good deal of the time they kep her locked up thare.

Well she uset to get out onto the top of the barn some times and talk to the moon and make up songs and sing to the moon and teeter along the peek of the barn, she would get out threw a broken board in the roof but the Ackleses figgered she had sense enough not to through her self offen the top of the barn.

Well capering that way and talking to the moon must of soured her elements still more for one morn-ing they carried out some grub to her and she had hung her self.

A couple of weeks after they buried her a feller come into Jake Smith's bar room one night, he was a tramp, and he told Jake and me he layed down to sleep in the Ackles barn, and he hearn her talking and laughing and singing and he swore and crost his heart that he went out of thare and seen her ghost danceing along the ridge of the barn.

Well I says to Jake do you want to go back thare with this feller and me and see that ghost.

Clem, he says, I cant do it, I cant close this place up at only ten thirty tonight and drive away trade.

Well, Al, I says how about you.

I gotto stay here for the same reeson as Jake has Al says.

As fur as I'm concerned says the tramp if you go you know the way as well as I do, I am new to these





*But this here Sollomon was a humdinger. . . . He set onto his throne and all the ten thousand queens and concord bynes would say to each other, hush, hush, he is going to pull something, shuh, shuh, hush, hush.*



parts and wouldn't wish as a stranger to git in bad with nobody's ghosts.

Jake says why doant you go yourself, Clem.

Jake, I says to him, I aint scared of ghosts when they are bright in thare elements, but I wouldn't bother no ghost that was out of its mind.

Well, one word led to another like that till all of us got to joking and pertended we didnt beleave it, but I all ways wished I had of had nerve to go back.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Founding of Rome*

WELL going back to the early days of the world, Roam was the greatest umpire of them all, and the great moral lesson about Roam is that you orter be kind to animles for Roam was found by a dumb beest. Well you can read about that in Esaw's fables where it tells all about all the animles. Theyre were two babes in the woods and they straighed away from thare parents, thyre names was Caster and Pollus and they layed down in the woods and the birds come and covered them up with leevs.

Well says Caster these leevs is all o. k. but for the sake of argyment do we eat or do we not eat.

Well says Pollus I would love to throw my lip over a cup of milk.

One of these here wolves hearn them babes in the woods pleading for milk and she comes through the bushes and looks at them and she says to her self it would serve them humans right if I et them, but I dunno, what the hell, they are kind of cute, here am I with a bag full of milk and no pups and here are these brats wanting the milk, what the hell,

I will take a chance, mebbly theyer better than the common run of humans.

Well one word led to another till she adopts them brats and they growed up thinking they was wolves and that was one of the seven wonders of the world and after they growed up they found Roam and become the first umpires.

Well they was good sons to that old she wolf, they never let nothing harm her, and the lesson is you orter be kind to animles, you never can tell when an animle will do you a good turn.

There was this feller Lazarius in the good book, he was down and out and the dogs come and licked his sores and he got well and theyer was this feller Balum, he was riding onto a jack-ass and he lost his way and even forgot his own name and the jack-ass turned his head around and told him and on down to the days of Abram Lincoln, he was always kind to animiles and look where it landed him. He was good to colored men too, if it hadn't been for him Uncle Tom would of never been free nor his kids of crost the river on the ice.

Well I seen a good many shows in my time, regular shows and medicine shows and these here movies they got now a days but I never see any shows any more got as much general satisfaction in them as Uncle Toms cabin, what you want in a show is things moving lively and a little shooting and a chancet to laugh and the satisfaction of knowing the angils is

looking out for them that has done right. Well when Abram Lincoln started that show going he knowed what he was doing.

I says to Jake Smith one day, this is the hand that shook the hand of John L. Sullivan and layed my hand ker flump onto the bar.

Well says Jake what the hell and he banged his hand onto the bar and he says this is the hand that shook the hand of Abram Lincoln, now where do you get off at.

I doant beleave it says Hennery Withers, but that dam little athyiss doant beleave anything.

Well Jake says when I was three years old I was out in Illinoyes and my dad took me to a rally and Abram Lincoln was speaking and he helt me up and I shook the hand of Abram Lincoln, and besides being a grand speaker he could of tied one hand behind him and licked John L. Sullivan.

The question aint which one could of licked, says Hennery Withers, the question is wich one done the most good in the world, John L. Sullivan or Abram Lincoln.

Shut up, I says to Hennery, I doant want any dam little athyiss butting in when me and Jake is talking of great men.

Jake, I says, it doant stand to reason you could of noticed much about him when you was three yeers old or whether he could of licked John L. Sullivan or not.

Noticed, says Jake, I noticed every thing about him, I even recollect what he said in his speech, my dad says to me, boy this is a great day for you, I want you to git inspired by Mr. Lincoln and always remember what he said and you can tell it when you are an old man it will help you live right. And it always has helped me, says Jake, I all ways lived right, I made up my mind when I went into the liquor business I would keap a decent place and I all ways done it.

Well so did John L. Sullivan, I says.

What is that speech if you recollect it so well, says Hennery Withers, sticking up his nose.

Mebby you think I doant says Jake getting red in the face, and he said the speech. It was something about when in the course of human events, we the peeple of these United States, and I wished I had wrote it down the way Jake pulled it.

Now then says Jake, do I recollect it or doant I, Hennery Withers.

Well then says Hennery Withers slinging his hand down onto the bar, here is the hand that oncet wroate a letter to Bob Ingersawl and got an answer to it.

Jake I says if you gonna have men like Bob Ingersawl bragged up in youer bar room you and me gotta part company. I drinked my liquor in youre place for more than twenty yeers and never had no trouble with nobody, but if Hennry Withers here

is a gonna butt in and brag up Bob Ingersawl like he was a great man like John L. Sullivan or Abram Lincoln I'm gonna quit you, Jake.

It sounded easy enough in them days to say you would quit a bar room, theyre was all ways another on the next corner. But to-day I doant mind saying that fur the liberty of putting my stummick against a real bar I would lissen to Hennery Withers bragging up Volteer his self.



## CHAPTER TEN

### *The Wisdom of Sollomon*

WELL, going back to the early days, Sollomon was about the only bird, weather king or a honest cityzen, who ever got a repatashion for wizdom that desurved that repatashion.

Most of these here fellers that has got a repatashion for wize birds has got it because they don't say nothing, they just set around and look wize and important and let on theyer doing hevvy brain work and say yes and no in a wize way, theyer scared to say anything for feer it will be found out they aint so wize.

But this here Sollomon was a hummdinger, he wasn't scared to spit out what he knowed and it was reel wizdom.

He set onto his throne and run his fingers threw his long white whiskers and done real brane work and all the ten thousand queens and concord bynes would say to each other, hush, hush, he is a gonna pull something, shuh, shuh, hush, hush.

And then he would raise his skeptor and the trumps would blow and when they hearn the trumps a lot of concord bynes all dressed in white come running up with theyer note books and set by the foot of

the throne to learn wizdom and say what is it this time yure majisty, a adverb or a riddle?

And then he would pull a wize crack, he wasn't scared to come out in the open with his wizdom where it could be judged, he had the real goods.

Well, I was brought up on them sayings of Sollo-mon. I owe my suksess in life to follering that old birds advise. He says, keep away from the wine cup, be wair of mixed wine, and it is good advise. I read that more than thurty yeers ago and I stuck to hard liquor ever since and now I am passed sixty and I never knowed a days sickness in my life I am strong as a bull and got eye site so I could thred a needle by moonlight, he knowed what he was talking about that old bird, I never had any reegrets about living the way he told me and I got a cleen conshince a good eal of the time. Nobudys got it all the time.

But a lot of times these birds thats got a repytashun for wizdom has got it because they doant say any thing a tall. Right here in Baycliff L Ileand I seen that. Theyer was a bird by the name of Phill Marks was a printer he set tipe on the weekly Pallydyim, he got the derndest repatashon for wizdom because he never spoke he only nodded his head.

He had all ways got a big chew of tobacco into his mouth, he was one of them fellers wouldn't even take it out to take a drink of worter, he would only shift it to one side and drink past it.

Peeple used to ask him about everything and he would nod yes or no and look sollum and shift that chew of tobacco around and say nothing.

Well, he had me fooled for twenty yeers and then one day I ketched him for oncet without his chew and I askt him point blank why it was he never talked any.

Well, he says, I never talked any because I would hate to spit out a good chew of tobacco and waist it.

And thats all his repatashyun for wizdom was bilt on, and for yeers peeple had been making theyer wills and buying and selling land and voting and marrying their dawters off and sending theyer boys off to school and hiring theyer help all by weather he would nod yes or shake his head no.

Well Phil I says to him you certinly got a big follering in this town on account of the advise you give.

Is that so he says I never payed no attenshun to what the dam fools was saying I was thinking of something else.

For the sake of argyment what was it you was thinking of, I says.

Well he says of my chewing tobacco, what the hell, and with that he bit off a peece and plugged it into his mouth and I knowed him ten yeers after that and never hearn him speak again.

Well, Sollomon was a different kind of a bird, he was all ways pulling wizdom and the queen of Bath

Sheeba herself says he was one of the seven wonders of the world.

Well, she was a classy dame her self, it was her put him wize to them Mines.

Right in the middel of Affrico they was, and they was lost for yeers and this feller Hennery M. Stanley found them again, dimonds as big as hens eggs, them Mines was one of the seven wonders of the world and now the red white and blue, the American flag flies over them Mines, Jake Smith read about them Mines, it tells about them in a book.

Jake and me used to talk a good eal about them Mines when we went fishing. He would say, Clem, what would you do if you was to disscover Mines like king Sollomon's mines.

I dunno, I says, what would you do, Jake.

Well he says the first thing the old shebang would get a fresh coat of paint and after that I would travell.

Well, I says I would travell too, I would travell to queer countrys where theyer is natives.

But first off I would travell to see the seven wonders of the world.

I wouldnt travell to see them if I had them Mines, Jake says, what the hell, I would press a button and when the boy come I would say you bring them seven wonders of the world to me and step lively or I will quit this hotel.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *A Roman Party*

WELL theyer is no use talking, in the early days of the world when the kings and umpires and Fairos wanted to pull a party they pulled it right, they didn't pinch nikles, theyre was some enjoyment in the world in them days and prohibishun was a clowd on the sky no bigger than a man's hand.

When Ceesar was umpire of Roam he would say what! ho! up with the port cullis

And the port cullis would come up.

Well Ceesar he would say rubbing his hands what shall it be.

Am I umpire or aint I, Ceesar would say.

You dam well know you are Ceesar, the port cullis would say, yure majesty, I will put a tin eer on the bird says youer not.

Umpire of Roam and the whole durned world besides Ceesar would say, I fit for the belt and I earnt it.

I'm a gonna pull a party, port cullis, Ceesar would say, and I want something flossy, something would make Sollomon in all his glory look like a piker. I leev the deetails to you, port cullis, but theyer

is one little thing I want tended to particler. I want the whole derved collyseeim filled with wine, you get me.

Filled how deep yure majesty says the port cullis grinning and twiddling with the napkin over his arm.

To the eeves says Ceesar, so that nobody can get into the place axcept threw the roof. Fill her up, port cullis, fill her up till the roof floats. And I want the intire Roamin navy sailing on that wine, this here is a gonna be a house boat party, how uproaryous it will be, port cullis, when the gests begin to push eech other overbord, get out the bids right now and ask all the queens in Roam, all my queens and any queens that hapen to be visiting hear, what I want, port cullis, is a party befitting the umpire of the known world.

Well, no sooner said than done, and that party was one of the seven wonders of the world.

Well in the old days them kings and umpires and Fairos was big in theyer notions, what they wanted was everybudy to have a good time.

In the present area of the world theyer only a few men left that is big in theyer notions.

John L. Sullivan was a man that was big in his notions.

And right hear in Baycliff L. Ileland lives a man that has all ways been big in his notions and that man is my old friend Jake Smith.

He aint got the money and he never had it to spend like Julius Ceasar or John L. Sullivan, but as fur as he could go Jake all ways went.

If a feller comes in and says for the sake of argy-ment Jake I got hold of some mighty good quails or some venzon from up state out of season or some tertles do you want to buy them Jake he would say bring them along I'm a gonna pulla party.

Jake would look at that good grub and he would say what the hell that is too good to give to the reglar borders of my Pallis Hotel or any of these summer peeples or any of these hear ottermobeel parties, I'm a gonna eat that myself, me and my friends are.

And I'm gonna cook it myself, too, theyre never was a woman born could cook as well as Jake when he gits his hands on the right kind of grub.

So he would get hold of me and three or four others of his reel friends and him and Al would shut up the bar room, Dern trade, Jake would say, what do I care for trade, I ain't one of the kind of men would keep my place open just for the sake of money when I wanted to do something else.

He was all ways big in his notions, Jake was.

He would cook that stuff better than anything you ever throwed your lip over and theyer would be enough of the right kind of likkids to season it down with, and him and me and Al and four or five more pertickler friends would have a bankwet and tell stories and sing songs and narrate yarns about

when the Injuns lived in this country and Jake would always say to me, Clem, if I had a million dollars I wouldn't do nothing but jest this, cook fur my friends all the time and give parties and tell stories and sing and mix drinks for them, dern buysness, what I like is for to live like a human being.

He is a man that is big in his notions Jake is, he is all ways getting down and out, and then making money agen, what Jake orter be is the umpire of some place like Roam whare he wouldn't have to worry about money.

Prohibishm come long and ruined Jake and if it hadn't of been for bootlegging line of professhin opening up a little bit later he would of been plum ruined, but proverdence all ways expends a helping hand for them that has all ways led the right kind of a life and has been big in theyer notions and Jake has all ways been a good man.

Jake wears the same vest to day as before he become a prominent boot legger, he is never the one to get prowded up and haughty.

Dern it all, Clem, he says to me the other day, I make plenty of money, but something goes with it, and my daughters at the swell girl school is a turrible expendytire. Those girls been trying to make me give up that vest and wear a coat even in hot wether, and one of them girls gone and got her self engaged to marry a young preacher sence shes been off to school. Well, Clem, I can stand him if he can stand



me, it might not be a bad thing to have a preacher in the fambly.

Well all of Jake's fambly has gone into society but Jake, you couldn't axactly say they look down on Jake, they have took to calling him Papa instead of the old man or dad and whenever they call him Papa he snorts.

Well a good meny things has been spilled onto that vest the last few yeers, but he wouldn't be Jake to me and his pals without that vest, if they ever get Jake into society they will have to drag him into it feet first after his expiration.

Well in my next chapter I will go back to the early days of the world.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *The Fate of Alexander*

WELL, going back to the early days of the world we come onto Alicksander the great, he was the umpire of the known world, and if you had of said prohibishin to him he would of beaned you with his skepter.

Well he went too fur with it, one of the morel lessons theyre is going to be in my histry of the world is you mustnt go too fur with it whatever it is.

He would say to his hinchman, well now, for the sake of argyment what did I conker last month.

It is all jotted down in the big book yure majisty says the hinchman.

And they would bring in the big book and say last month yure majisty you conkerd Ashia and Affrico and the British Iles.

Well says Alicksander how much did Ceesar conker this same month last year.

Yure avridge is a way ahead of Ceesar's yure majisty says the hinchman, besides at yure age he hadn't showed hardly any stuff at all.

Am I one of the seven wonders of the world or aint I says Alicksander.

I'll say you are says the hinchman, and they would have a party on it.

Well I aint any enemy of vittles and drinkabels, but you can go too fur with it. If he hadn't of conkered so much he might of lived to a good old age, for he all ways pull a party right after he conkered something new.

One night right in the midst of a party he says all of a sudden what shall we conker tomorrow.

They aint anything left yure majisty says the hinchman, and some countrys has been conkerd two and three times.

For a minute Alicksander was prowld, and then he turned sad, do you mean to tell me he said theyer aint nothing left to do but eat and drink? Let me look at that book myself, say what country is that over to the end of the map colored blue.

That is Ashia, says the hinchman, doant you remember the shapes of the countrys you have conkered, what a dumb bell you would be yure majisty if you wasn't an umpire, I keep this book proper and I got a pride in my jottings.

Alicksander says then theres reely nothing but vittles and drink.

Well he done the best he could to take his exercize in other ways, but he missed the conkering, the conkering had all ways kep his flesh down no matter how much he et and drunk before, an he got fatter and fatter and one day he fell offen his throne right

in the midst of the pallis with all the queens and concord bynes and hinchmen around him and busted wide open, he went too fur with it.

Right here in Baycliff L ileland I seen that same sort of thing happen. If yure gonna eat and drink that a way you either got to take no exercise at all and give your total time and yure total thoughts to it and make it yure buysness in life or else you gotto take so much exercise you get the fat off, you cant mix it with every day life.

Jeff Hoskins who uset to be the villige drayman prided his self he could eet severil dozen clams and five or six pounds of stake and a coupla dozen eggs and potatoes and some pies and things and worsh it all down with beveridges all at one setting and I seen him do it in Jake's place twicet in one day to settil a bet. Well he went too fur with it.

If he had of just done nothing else it might of agreed with him. Or if he had took a most unusual exersise it might of agreed with him, but he made the mistake of trying to work along at his drayman buysness and he got fatter and fatter and his wife quits him and he got to be a kind of a joke and it made him sadder and sadder.

One day he sys to me and Jake and Al in Jake's place, Boys I'll be dogged if I wouldnt comit suicide for a cent.

Well then says I how would you do it, Jeff, for you couldn't drown yourself, you are so fat you would float?

Yes, says Al, and you couldn't stab yourself, all your vitle orgins and ornaments is so fur inside of you no knife could reach thre the fat and slash them.

Well, says Jake, Jeff couldn't hang his self, neither, for the rope want never twined as wouldn't brake with his weight on it.

If you throwed yure self down in front of an ottermobile, says I, it would just stop the ottermobile.

Jeff he begun to blubber and cry and he says we would only be too glad to see him one of the departed and he guest he could starve to deth if he wanted to.

You aint got the nerve for it says Hennerly Withers, that dam little athyiss all ways has got a mean and disscurging word for everybody.

Well then says Jeff laying his head down onto the bar and says sobbing and shaking, I guess I could eat my self to deth.

Well, he done it.

He went too fur with it, Jeff did. One of the more lessons I am a gonna bring into this histry is you musnt never go too fur with anything, just a little exercize is good if you take a little beveridges, and if you take more beveridges you want to dance and sing a lot and whoop her up or you will get too fat.

I all ways owed my good helth to dancing and singing a lot and whooping her up when I drunk a lot, it has kep me young, I wouldn't give any budy a morel lessen only one that I had all ways followed my self.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *On Reform*

WELL you didn't heer so much about reform in the erly days of the world as you do nowadays, all them old peetryarchs beleaved in letting well enough alone, if you had made laws and wished it onto them they wouldn't of known what it was all about.

Well that is one trubble with this country to-day, it was wished onto it, the country didn't wish it onto itself.

Well I know how that is myself, oncet it was wished onto me.

One afternoon I was coming home from Jake Smith's place feeling kinda sick because some fellows had been smoking in Jake's place a new kind of tobacco I had never smelt before and it takes me a long time to get a customered to any new kind of tobacco, and I was kind of wobbly in the knees, and when I got near to the house I set down on the ground.

Well Matildas old cat, Matilda is Mrs. H., seen me set down sudden that way, and she looked at me and she give a grin and that made me mad. I says

no cat can grin at me that away even if I am all sick and wobbly with that tobacco. Matilda orter teach that cat better manners, and I throwed my shoes at that cat, but she kept on grinning. Well I chased her and that was how I happened to fall into the well.

Mrs. H. sees me fall in and she come running out of the house and yells down, are you hurt, Clem?

I wasn't, theyer was only a coupla feet of water in thare, and I says you mind your own busyness Mrs. Hawley, go get a ladder and let me out of here, that cat of yourn has been a mocking of me.

Well she says you was intoxicated when you fell into that well and into that well you stay Clem Hawley until you sign the pledge.

It was tobacco smoke made me sick, Ma, I says, you get a ladder, I will come out and kill that dam cat of yourn.

But Matilda went and got the Rev. Mister Carter the pastor of the church she belongs to and she says we got Clem where we want him now, you come along and help me make him sign the pledge.

Five or six come along with the Rev. Mister Carter and the news spred, and purty soon the whole town was into our front yard looking down on me in that well.

Brother, says the Rev. Mister Carter.

Doant you brother me I says, let me out of here.

You ain't goanto get out he says till you sign the pledge

And with that he begun one of these here old-fashioned revivul sermons. I heard lots of revivul preachers take up hell and damnashion by the seat of its pants and wave it in theyer congregashions faces, but I never herd anything like that sermon the Rev. Mister Carter preached down that well at me. He made me so certain I was dammed it didn't look to me like theyer was any uset to sign a pledge, I was a gonner anyhow, a regular mammal of iniquity.

But it made me so mad too that I wouldn't let it work on me. I been converted lots of times at revivul meetings, and when I let it work on me I can shout with any of them, but this time I helt it off from working on me.

But a lot of others that was thare got converted all over again, and they begun to shout and sing hymns over me, and I got madder and madder.

Pretty soon some of the boys from Jake's place herd of what was going on, and they come over and stood by the fence in the street, and they says that preacher orter be arrested for keeping me in that well, I ain't used to that much well water, and it will kill me.

Then my wife and some of the other mammals of righteousness says it looks as if Satan, meaning me, was a goanto hold out a long time, and everybody was getting hungry, and so they says why not have an old-fashioned love feest along with theyer revivul meeting, and they done it, the wimmen





*They would race these here ibexes up and down the Nile and all the queens and courtesians used to set on the palls steps and cheer when them Faroes went racing by on their ibexes.*



hustled home and hustled back with grub, and pick-nicked like at a camp meeting. And they would sing more hymns at me, and pray and carry on, and shout, and weap, and every oncet in a while the Rev. Mister Carter would let loose with another sermon.

Well along about eight o'clock that night it begun to get purty cold down in that well, and my sickness from smelling that tobacco smoke had wore offen me, and theyer wasn't no way to set down. I was afeared if I set down in that water I would be drowned, I was so weary, and I was purty hungry too, listening to all that eating going on up above me, and I would of give anything for a good drink of likker, and I thinks to myself I am getting consumpshin of the lungs, for chills are coming all over me, and I got the notion lizards was crawling along my legs, and I says to myself, I have stood out a long time for my principles, I guess I better make a compromise.

So I says, Mister Carter, put down a ladder and let me out, and I will sign the pledge for three months.

You'll sign it for life, says Mrs. H., or you stay there.

Well I says, Matilda, life or three months is the same to me, I ain't goanto live more'n three months after this experience. Theyer is more ways than one of killing a husband, Mrs. H., and you've took a new way. I ain't mean enough to haunt you, but

you're goanto have remorse for this. And I fetched a cough.

Matilda, she is soft-hearted; I always liked Matilda and I always bragged on her, she begun to cry and she says sign for three months, and come out.

They give me the ladder and I signed for three months, and then I done what anyone would naturally do, I went over to Jake Smith's place and had a coupla drinks.

I says I signed for three months, but I didn't say which three months. But I'm a goanto keep my word; I am all ways a man of my word I will take a day out of every week and not drink for a coupla of years some time, and make up the three months a day at a time thataway, when a man has got as good a wife as Mrs. H. he orter keep his word to her all ways.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *The Liberal Old Patriarchs*

WELL, in the erly days of the world, if one of them old peetryarchs had plenty he belaved in dividing it up, it was come easy go easy with them old peetryarchs, they kep open house al the time, and if you had of asked one of them birds what he thought of prohibishion he would of took down the jug from his mouth and wiped his lips on the back of his hand and beaned you with the jug.

Theyer aint many peeple so libural nowadays as them old peetryarchs, for the sake of argyment if a man's got vast wealth today he spends it onto his self.

Well Jake Smith is like one of them old peetryarchs, after prohibishin ruined him along come boot-legging and put him onto his feet again, and now he keeps open house again and theyer is all ways a passel of relations and friends living offen Jake.

I could always get in money, Clem, he says, but I never could keep it, what the hell, Clem I doant want a expensive grave stone, let my moniment be all the poor thirsty soles I set 'em up to on the house when they was busted and theyer tungs hanging out.

Well, now his dawters is trying to get Jake into swell society, but he wont wear a coat when the wether's warm, and sumer or winter he sticks to that old corduroy vest of hisn.

I would look fine at my time of life putting on swallow tail dekollertay suits, wouldn't I, Clem, he says, I wouldn't know what to do with my hands and feet and patent lether shoes and eye glasses, what the hell, and stiff cuffs all ways errytates the backs of my hands, and one of them hats that all ways looks to me like it orter have a handle onto it and be filled with beer and how could I eat with a biled shirt on. I never was a juggler, I would spill things on it.

How you a goanto scratch your self with one of them stiff biled shirts on.

Well Jake I says to him you could lean up against a door and scratch your self the same as you do now between the shoulders, them biled shirts ain't stiff all the way round.

Is that so, says Jake, I all ways thought they was, but I couldn't scratch myself with silk gloves on anyhow, I never could ware gloves summer or winter, the minute I put on gloves it destroys the touchiness of my hands, if I want to take hold of anything with gloves on I can't feel myself touch it, I woant wear them silk gloves for any dawter.

But he talks about it so much that it shows it is onto his mind, and his women folks after him day

and night to fix himself up some, now that he is a prominent bootlegger, and take his proper place in society, that is the way they put it, and sooner or later Jake is a goanto fall for it, I will bet you, and another good man will be gone. Sampson I told you about in my first chapter said he wouldn't have his hair cut, neether, but he did have it cut, his women folks worked onto him.

Well I all ways beleaved in being libbural myself, it all ways paid me, my old daddy left me considerable land around Baycliff here, it wasnt worth much when he had it, and being libbural has paid me, every time I ever sold a peece of that land I all ways took the boys over to Jake's place and set 'em up, and the consikwences was that in between times I could all ways borrow money offen the boys, and I ain't done so bad, I still got one lot left with only two morgages onto it and a son and a dawter making theyer own living.

As a matter of fact you could say I owed my suksess in life to being libbural that a way, I never wasted much of my time working at steady jobs, theyer is something about a steddy job takes all the pleasure out of a man's life, I uset to run a livery stable and then I run a gayrage, and I owe my suksess in life to not letting them jobs eat up all my time.

If you was to let a job eat up all of your time you would get old too quick, if you doant learn how to

whoop it up a little when you are young how are you going to have an occypation for your old age, you cant learn old dogs new tricks, some of these fellers that spends all theyer time working has got no idea of whooping it up in theyer old age, they never had any practice at it.

Well, the first thing I knowed I didn't have any gayrage to take care of, it was morgages got it, but if I had give all my time to that gayrage it would of still been on my hands to be looked after, and it got so it errytated me, but now I got rid of that and I feel like a free man again, I can go fishing when I want to without talking to some pest about a car he wants, I all ways liked horses better than cars anyhow.

And it gives me time to plan out big busyness deals and make inventions; when I am fishing I think up a lot of inventions and big busyness deals I could put over if I had a little reddy money.

But that is one of the curses of the world, the fellers that do the big brain work and have the genius idears hardly ever has the reddy money at hand to push theyer big idears with.

Well it was a good many years ago one day I was down to the deepot and when the trane come in I says to myself why couldn't a thing be made to run like that onto the roads instead of on rale road tracks. And a coupla years later an ottomobeel entered our little city.



Well it was my idear, you could say as a matter of fact that I invented ottomobeels, only at the time I didn't have the reddy money to push my big idear.

It was the same way with these hear airyoplanes one day I was fishing and watching some gulls and I says to myself why couldn't a machine be made to fly thataway, yes, you could practically say I am the bird that invented airyoplanes.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *The Advantages of Orthodox Belief*

WELL, one of the most prominent peetryarchs in the early days of the world was named Dooteronomy, he must of been some kind of a foreigner by his name, and Jake Smith says to me one day that one of the main troubles of the world is having so many foreigners into it.

Well, then, Jake, I says, everybody in this country was foreigners to start out with, I doant know whare you are a gonna draw the line.

Al the bartender says the Irish wasn't foreigners in this country to begin with. Wherever the Irish goes, he says, they ain't foreigners.

Well then, I says, what are they.

Well, he says, they are Irish, they ain't foreigners.

Well, mebbby he is right about it; I noticed that about a good many of the Irish myself.

This old bird Dooteronomy wasn't Irish, he must of been one of the Beegats, he was one of the birds led the children of Izzryel out of Egyp, and when he got to the promised land he says, now then, I brought you Beegats this far, I'm a gonna turn you over to

somebody else, and he turned them over to a bird by the name of Joshaway.

He was some fighter, this Joshaway, and one day the Beegats was fighting against the Phillipsteens and it come along dark and Joshaway says some of them is a gonna get away after sun down and he cries out in a loud voice for the sun and moon to stand still and they done it.

And that was one of the seven wonders of the world. Jake and me was talking about that one day and Jake says how do you suppose he done it?

I doant suppose I says, I doant have to suppose, it says in the good book he done it, and I say he done it, and that is enough for me.

Yes, says Hennery Withers, the dam little athyiss, you and Jake are supposititious.

Well, I says, if it was easy for to beleave theyer wouldn't be no credit in beleaving it, would thare? Anybody can beleave anything that is easy to beleave. But it takes somebody with some git-up and gumption to him to beleave stuff that is hard to beleave.

I doant ask no credit from no one for beleaving easy things, but when I beleave them tall stories and all that hard stuff I take credit for it, for it shows I am a humdinger of a beleaver.

Well, then, he says, why aint it ever been done before or since.

So as it would be a wonder, I says. If it was done

every two or three weeks it wouldn't of been a wonder. It is only folks who is strong in theyer elements has got the gumption to beleave in wonders. When folks cant beleave in nothing, like you, Hennery Withers, you dam little athyiss you, that aint a sign theyer strong in theyer elements, that is a sign theyre weak in theyer elements.

Besides which, I says, it is in print, aint it. How would it ever of got printed in the first place if it wasn't true.

Well, says Hennery Withers, that shows what a iggoramus you are, when that story about Joshaway was first told theyre wasn't any print, it was all writing.

I figgered I had took about enough of his sass for one day, so when he pulled that onreasonable statement onto me I just cuffed him one.

But sometimes I feel kind of sorry for Hennery Withers, too. Besides his being a dam little athyiss theyer ain't anything much wrong the matter with him. But he never got long very well hear in Bay-cliff L. Ileland. If he was to sing and dance and whoop it up the way I do he couldn't get away with it, but as for me I owe my suksess in life to doing what I please, everybody will always lend me money and everything, my credit is all ways good with Jake Smith, and my suksess is all on account of living the right kind of life and doing what I pleased and being a beleaver and patterning myself after those old

pettryarchs, but a man who doant bèleave in nothing, like Hennery Withers, cant ever make a suksess of his life. He has got nobody like those old pettryarchs to pattern his self after.

One of the morel lessons there is goanto be in my histry of the world is a goanto be you got to have some grate man like that to pattern after or you wont be a suksess in life.

I can borrow money offen almost any friend I got, if I ask them for a ten they say, what the hell, Clem, of course I will let you have a coupla dollars, and Jake Smith all ways says doant you worry about your likker bill, Clem, some day one of them inventions of yourn will make good and we will all have money to burn, that is the kind of a feller Jake Smith is.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### *Where the Moslems Come From*

WELL, the world went along a little further, and then come a lot of these here Muslims you read about, a Muslim is a feller that doant drink any likker, they are Turks and Ayerabs and Mohamidins, and these Muslims is one grate proof the human race wasn't dessended offen monkeys.

It stands to reeson that the human race never dessended itself down offen monkeys, monkeys is a gination of postirritity that dissended their selves down offen mankind, and I will show you in a minnit where them Muslims come in at.

Theyer was some cities in the erly days, Soddim and Gomorrow, got so wicked they wasn't fit to print and they was wiped offen the map, but a few famblies got away afore they was wiped out and likely they was the wickedest ones, and they went out into the wilderness and multiplied and refurnished the earth and forgot what little they ever knowed about the right way to live.

They forgot they orter eat theyer food cooked and they orter drink a little likker for theyer stumock's sake. And they sunk lower and lower till they turned

into these hear Muslims you read about, they got no idear of right living nor anything, they doan't beleave the Good Book and sted of being civerlized they worship this feller Mohamid, they doant drink any likker, they are a bad lot.

And after they turned into Muslims, and forgot about the right kind of vittles and beveridges, they got lower and lower, till some of the worst Muslims turned into monkeys, the proof of it is if you catch a Muslim or a monkey in his wild state he doant know what likker is, the next time you see one of them in a circus you ask the men who has charge of them. Well, all I say is, just look at them!

That is the way Muslims and monkeys come into this world, they dissended offen man, and what is a goanto happen to a country where its likker is taken away I would hate to say, but what histry done in the past she may do again.

Well Hennery Withers, the dam little athyiss, says that men dissended offen monkeys, I have banged his head more'n oncet for that kind of wicked talk, it is a good thing this country has got men in it to bang the heads of all them athyisses.

He says to me one day, yes, I s'pose you beleave the world is flat, too.

No, I says, it ain't flat, but at the same time no one ever proved to my sattisfaction it is round like an apple or a orange like the gography books say, as a matter of fact it has got six flat sides to it, like a

dice you shake has got. All them Himma Yellow mountins and other mountins is like where the edges of the dice sticks up, how could it be round like an orange with all them mountins sticking up.

Well the old book is good enough for me, I beleave it from cover to cover; the old time religion and straight likker and calomel has got the kick to them they are among the seven wonders of the world.

Well, I have proved that men wasn't dissended offen monkies, and I will take up the erly days again in my next chapter.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### *The Taking of the Basteel*

*Mr. Hawley, while he was engaged on his History of the World, in 1923, took a trip to Paris, sending installments of his Work back to America. The subsequent chapters are somewhat colored by the environment in which they were written. With Mr. Hawley went his friend Al, Bartender, and they were joined later by Jake Smith himself.*—EDITOR'S NOTE.

PARIS, France, August 30.—Well, I promised, no matter wherever I was, I would keep right on with my histry of the world, well looking round over Paris the first place nacherally I made for was where the battle of the Basteel was fought.

Well in the erly days that Basteel was one of the seven wonders of the world, the old time kings had it built to throw these here reformers into it, they uset to set up onto the top of it with a spy glass and look out over Paris and all theyer queens and courteesyans would be setting round about them on the roof, and the king would say to the port cullis take a peek through this spy glass, do you see any disturbance anywheres?

Yes, your majesty, the port cullis would say, I see quite a disturbance over there in the shong.

Yes, the king would say, theyer is sure a lot of dust being kicked up over theer in that shong. What do you reckon it is, port cullis?

It is probable it is some of them reformers kicking up a rumpus, yure majesty, says the port cullis.

Send the Jong Darms after them, says the king, and they would ketch the reformers and bring them up to the roof of the Basteel and drop them down threw holes in the roof into the cells below and all the queens and courtesyans would nod at the king and wink and every body would take a shot of the reel stuff and say, That's that.

Well for thousands and thousands of yeers that way all the kings was able to keep the reformers out of Paris and all hands was happy and contented, till one day theyer was a reformer come along by the name of Saint Barthollomew, he was all the time kicking up a rumpus, and king Looey says, what the name of a hell, am I a king or ain't I a king, you would think this here Barthollomew was a king, for the sake of argyment, now, you ketch him and drop him into the Basteel.

But this hear Barthollomew beat them to it, he and his gang of reformers sneaked into the Basteel, and they rushed up onto the roof and massikered king Looey, and to this day that is known as the massiker of Saint Barthollomew.

Well the reformers got the best of it that time, and a little later theyer was another rumpus and the battle of the Basteel was fought, and the reformers took the entire royyal fambly and dropped them down threw those holes in the roof of the Basteel and poured kerosene oil onto them and set fire to the whole sheebang and that was the end of the Basteel and the royyal fambly.

Well it is a darned shame it is gone, since it is gone reform will come creeping in more and more, and some day Paris will be just as bad off as the Yountied Staits, though I can't say as I see much to worry about just now, they tried to take theyer abbsinthe from them, but you can get it, I never liked the darned stuff it always reminded me of parrgoric, what I am enjoying is the brandy, the vang ain't got the kick I am used to.

Well theyer orter be a Basteel like the old Paris Basteel setting in the center of every town in America with a king setting on top of it looking out against reformers.

I am in favor of them Basteels myself, if we had a lot of Basteels in America mebbby we would get some reel liberty and enjoyment of life and foresooth of happiness like it says in the declaration of inndependense.

If I was running for President of the U. S. I would make that my platform, a Basteel for every town, and every Basteel full of reformers, mebbby then we would get some freedom.

Al, he says he is learning a lot of new tricks, and I says to him what in the name of a hell will you do with them when you learn them, you got nothing to practice them on when you go home, all you got when you go home is boot leg likker.

Well, he says, theyer is a lot more to the soul than theyer is to the body, Clem. In my soul I am a bartender and a artist even when my boddy has got nothing to work on.

I will pick up all the bartending tricks I can here in Paris, Al says, and get them down fine, and mebbby theyr will come a happy day in the U. S. when I can use them again, annyhow when the grate moment comes I will be prepaired for it, I will of done my part.

And if my opportunity never comes again on this here earth, he says, my duty is done, and I will be prepaired for what the hereafter has to show for itself.

That is all a man can do, live the kinder life he ought to live, and prepair his self for the best, and then the rest of it is with fate and provvidense.

Well that is the way Al feels about it, and he is right. He is a good man, Al is, he has got a soul into his boddy, and a pride in his perfeshin.

One of the morel lessins theyer is going to be in my histry of the world is you orter do the best you can and leave the rest to provverdense, what in the name of a hell more can you do?

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### *Marie Antoinette*

PARIS, Sept. 7.—Well, I promised I would keep right on with my histry of the world after I got here in Paris, and Al and me was talking it over to-day and we both desided it was on all sides of us, well theyer is so much of it you would scarcely know where to start.

Well, the best way, Al says, is to get a taxxy cab and crews around a little bit, so I wrote down onto a piece of paper Maree Antonette, and showed it to the taxi man, which he says he speaks a little English and Al claims he speaks a little French, and between the two of them we found six differnt places yessterday afternoon where Maree Antonette was massicured. You could say for that girl she had a charmed life.

One of them was the Eyefull Tower, and you could see why they named it that, it is sure some eye full.

Al, I says, ask this bird in French whether Maree Antonette jumped off of it, or was she pushed, I got to get this histry of the world correct.

We was setting at one of them little sidewalk places, and the shofer was setting with us having one. I will say this for the French, if you was to

suggest prohibishin to them they would more than likely leed you to the jillyteen.

Al asks him something or other, and he says something to the garson, and the garson brings three bottles of vang, and I says what has that got to do with Maree Antonette.

You got to be pashent, Clem, Al says, you gotto take histry a little bit at a time in this town. They kind of wash it down, here, you leeve it to me.

All this vang, I says, is taking up room I had planned to save for something else. I doant want to throw any doubts onto your French, but so far you aint had the language to get me a shot of real booze. Eviry time we have found a place where Maree was massicured all afternoon it has been vang, vang, vang, and nothing but vang.

I am a goanto try it myself from now on. I says.

I want some red liquor.

Garson, you bring me a shot of whisky rooze.

Weesky, says the garson, wee.

You have intellects, I says to the garson, have one with us.

Cat weesky? he asks me.

Cat whisky, I says, or dog whisky, or any kind of whisky. I doant care what kind of annimals I see, so long as I get something that has got a kick in it.

Cat weesky, says the shofer, is four weeskies.

Well, we studied a little histry there, and then we went along down by the river, and we seen a building considerable longer than sevril trains of cars, and we set down at another one of these little sidewalk places acrost the way from it and Al and me speculated some about it.

By that time I was getting onto the langwidge a little myself. I says to the shofer, order cat more weeskies, and then tell us what that place is, it looks like all the raleroad stations in Europe had come to town.

He says we doant need cat more weeskies, and it is the Loov.

Order cat more anyhow, I says, I will drink two of them, it is too late to shows signs of weekness on this cat stuff, I suppose Maree was killed at this Loov place, too.

Wee, he says, and then he talks French to Al, and Al says we orter go in and see her statue.

Well, we went in and seen her statue, and I got a better idea of what must have happened to that poor queen than I ever had before.

It seems probably she wasn't killed all to oncet. They must of killed her piece meal.

There stood her statue in that Loov place, and the statue was made at the time her arms was broke off, and it was so quiet and respectful in there you could of heard a cork drop. From her waste line up her

cloathes was all off, poor girl they must of tried to kill her by axposure to the weather.

What she must have suffered at one time or another would of drawed tears from the heart of a stone.

Well, Al says, after talking some more of his French to the shofer, he says the worst is yet to be seen, they got another statue of her in here.

I got to have cat weeskies afore I feel strong enough to look at it, I says, poor girl, all because she was a queen that had spunk enough to speak up and say the Basteel shall not fall to-night.

So we went out and had cat weeskies for each one of us and we come back and the shofer showed us another statue of her on a stairway, and in this one not only is her arms gone, but her head is gone, and she has got wings on in this one.

Ask him about the wings, I says to Al.

Al asks him something, and then says to me the wings is to show she went to heaven in the end.

Clem, he says, it is like little Eva in Uncle Tom's Cabin; the wings is to show you can't keep a good girl down.

Well, we went out and had cat weeskies, and I got to feeling pretty bad about poor Maree. I went back and took another look at her standing on that stairway, with her head gone and her arms gone, and them wings stretching back, and I ain't ashamed to say I cried.

Come along to the hotel, Al, I says to him, if I see



another place to-day where Maree was killed I would break down entirely, if this French histry keeps on being as sad as this I'm a goanto go to London and look at something chearful like that tower whare they used to smother theyr princes in.

So we had cat more weeskies and went on home.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### *Henri Quatre and Haig Soixante*

PARIS, Sept. 11.—Well, just like I promised, I am a goanto keep my histry of the world going from Paris, and between Pierre, the shofer, speaking a little English and Al speaking a little French I am getting quite a lot of facts, which we carry this Pierre with us in his taxxy cab all over town.

Well theyer was a lot of them old-time kings, and the most of them was humdingers, we seen the Moniment of one of them on the Pong Nuff yesterday, it seems he was a regular hell cat and was responsible for a good many of them massicures they used to be all ways having over here.

Al, I says, you ask Pierre what this bird's name was.

Al has waited on table in some purty good places in his time, he learnt his French partly that way and partly, he says, he felt it breaking out on him like a rash when he landed in this country; he says, it is easy, Clem, if you fix your face right and then shove part of the words up your nose, you just watch the motions I make and you will ketch on.

He talked with Pierre and he says this old king

was known in his day as The Ornery Cat, he was some panther, he was, he could have licked Jack Dempsey.

Mebby, I says, mebbby he could, but just for the sake of argyment I will throw this here Pierre into the river if he says he could of licked John L. Sullivan.

Well, Al says, him and another bird by the name of Saint Bartholomew started the French revolushin and the massicures lasted for months and months.

Well, I says, mebbby he started them, but if John L. Sullivan had of been on deck he could of stopped them, tell me what else this Ornery Cat done.

Well, says Al, theyer is a little place over here by the end of the bridge, and I think we better have seece weeskies, that will be two a peece, I am getting tired of ordering only four and you all ways getting the extry one.

Well, no sooner said than done.

We rode around a little while and I says, you ask Pierre, Al, what that little dump over there is, it looks like it would of been a armory but it got discouraged, mebbby theyr is some new kind of beverages sold in there.

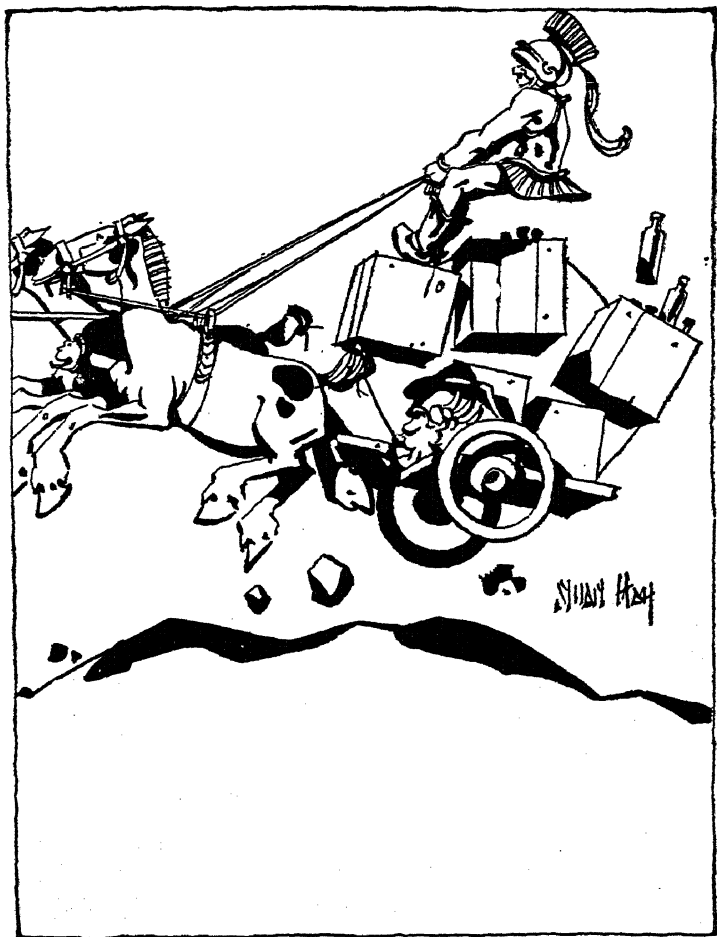
That, says Al, after he talks with Pierre, uset to be the place where they made the breath killers, it is called the tower of clovis, it was closed up on account of the war, but theyer is a place over there on the corner. So we went over theyr and had seece more weeskies.

What I want to see, I says, is the place where Napollion was born.

It is right around the corner, Al says, after he talked some with Pierre, and more than likely it has got chairs and tables setting out in front of it, and when we got there it had.

Well, it was a very humble little place, and I thought to myself what a wonder of the world he was to be born in such a little dump like that and make such a succes of life he got his self buried in a tomb as big as a United Staits post office bldg., and he owed his success in life to all ways doing what he dam pleased and not taking any back talk off of anybody.

They were cooking in that little dump, and I thought of the times Napollion didn't have a square meal to his name nor nothing to drink, and now his old home place was full of food and vang, and it made me so sad I asked Al to ask Pierre to order seece more weeskies, but Pierre had passed out of the picture, and when Al ordered them himself they brought sixteen weeskies instead of six, and I managed to make them understand it wasn't right, and then three waiters and the landlady that run the place got together and they talked with Al, and they looked surprised, but he showed them some money, and they went in and talked it over amongst themselves, and they come out to our table again and brought us sixty weeskies.



*"I'm going to pull a party, port cullis," Ceesar would say. . . . "I leev the deetails to you, port cullis, but theyer is one little thing I want tended to particler. I want the whole derved collyseeim filled with wine."*



Well, I says to Al, here we are a long way from home and the question is do we weaken or doant we weaken.

Clem, Al says, I never done nothing yet to disgrace the American flag in a furrin land.

Me neither, I says, and I had a lot of axperience in my time, but even for an axperienced hand it is quite a task that has been set before us.

Clem, he says, all we need is time.

Thank heaven, I got nothing to leeve my family, I says, for theyer ain't any chance of me making a will in the French language.

They axpect it of us, Clem, he says, and we gotto go through with it.

And sure enough the three waiters and the landlady was standing and waiting and looking at us in admirashin, and four or five of theyer frends was thare, and the news was spreading.

I really would hate to tell them it is too beaucoup, Al says, they would be so disappointed.

Don't tell them nothing more, I says, you are getting us in worse with every chunk of French language you pull on them, if you say anything more they will bring six hunderd of them, wake up Pierre a little and we will pour six or eight of them into him.

No sooner said than done.

Well, I wont say how far we got, but we done the best we could, and as if by magic we found ourselves in the midst of frends purty soon, and I woant say

what become of Pierre and Al, but after while I found myself sitting on some stone steps crying and a fellow says to me in American what are you so sorrowful about?

Well, I said, this is the river that Maree Antonette was drowned in.

She must of been a grate friend of yours, he says, the way you take on over her, and if I hadn't of pulled you back a minute ago you would of been in the Seine.

I doant care, I says, if I do roll in; the way they used that poor queen is enough to brake any man's heart that has got any right feelings in him, you leeve me alone with my grief.

Lerning histry on the spot is a good deal more touching on the elements and emotions than lerning it out of books, you get to thinking how hard a time them poor people had, and if you are any kind of a man a tall you got to cry a little, and I told this feller so.

Uh-huh, he says, but it is pretty late to weep over the Boorbons now.

They wasn't Boorbons, I told him, they was Skotches, all of them was Haig and Haig.

Well, theyer is a place near here called Verrsigh, and they say it is one of the seven wonders of the world, after me and Al and Pierre gets rested up a little we are going out and give it the oncet over.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

### *Looley Cat Horse*

PARIS, Sept. 15.—Well, me and Al and Pierre, the shofer, went out to this Verrsigh place the other day and seen where the old kings used to live, and I will say it must of took quite a gang of hired girls to keep that place going, to say nothing of the back yard, which is as big as a county fair grounds, and in the old days all them fountains uset to be spouting vang instead of water.

Well, theyr ain't enough difference between the two to get a man excited when he has been brought up on hard liquor, France is only one jump ahead of prohibishin, as far as I can see, with vang and beer and all them soft drinks, you hardly ever see any of the French drinking hard liquor.

This old Looley Cat Horse that built the place was some bird in his day, theyr is a statue of him on his horse in the front yard, and all around twenty or thirty other statues of kings and dukes he knocked out or got the decision onto, and when he would knock out a king he would say, what the hell, what kind of a looking wife has this bird got.

Well, your majesty, the john darm would say, she is considerable looker, or she ain't, as the case might be, and Looey Cat Horse would say, You trot her over to the palace, I will see for myself.

And if she was quite a looker he would sign her on.

After while the Verrsigh palace got filled up with queens and concord bynes he had signed up just like the old peetryarchs in the early days of the world, and he says what the hell, john darm, go and give orders for some more pallisses.

So they built some more pallisses all around the big pallis to hold the queens and concord bynes, and you can see the pallisses yet, they have turned them into hotels, theyr is room enough in each one of them for half a dozen queens and concord bynes, and them hotels has got the same hawty notions they had in the old days. They are the only places in France that makes you remember how much drinks cost in America, so far as I have seen.

He could set up on top of his big pallis and look for miles and miles in every direction, and one day he was setting up theyr and looked out towards Paris and he seen quite a cloud of dust coming his way.

John darm, he says, what is that.

Your majesty, says the john darm, it looks to me like the French revolushin was coming this way.

I thought I give orders theyr wasn't to be any, says the king.

These birds say theyr through taking orders, says the john darm.

What in the name of a hell, john darm, says the king, do they really mean business, this gang.

Wee, your majisty, says the john darm.

By that time the gang was all up in the court yard, yelling like ravelling wolves, it was getting seryus.

Fling them a queen, says the king.

So they pitched Louise La Valleree offen the roof. That only stopped them for a minute.

Fling them another queen, says Looley Cat Horse.

No sooner said than done.

Pretty soon they began to run out of queens.

What shall we do now, yure majisty, says the head john darm.

What in the name of a hell, says the king, if the queens is all gone you will have to start in on the concord bynes. I hate it, but theyr doant look to be any other way out, they gotto go.

Just then Queen Maree Antonett came running up to the roof, and she fell onto her knees and says, Yure majisty, I am the last queen left, and I am the one theyr all after.

I can't bear to see these poor innocent concord bynes flung to the mob, when I am really the one they are all after. Fling me to the mob, yure majisty, and save the poor, innocent concord bynes.

Maree, the king says, you are a noble girl. It hurts me to refuse anything you ask me to do, but I cannot fling you to the mob. John darm, fill the big coach with concord bynes and have it waiting in the back yard at the foot of the secret staircase, I am going to save Maree if I can.

He climbed into the coach with Maree and took the reins himself, and they galluped the horses for Paris, and pretty soon the crowd got wise and gained onto them.

John darm, throw them a concord byne, shouts the king.

No sooner said than done.

But in two minutes they had hung her to a lamp post and was gaining on the king again, yelling they wanted Maree Antonett, and nobody else.

Fling them another concord byne says king Looey.

And all the way to Paris it went like that, with concord byne after concord byne being flung to the mob. Maree, says the king, if I can oncet get into the Loov I will save you yet.

But they turned over the carriage right on the Plass de Concord, whare theyr is a big spike sticking up now to mark the place, and king Looey took the name of Smith and escaped from the mob, but poor Maree had her head chopped off thare.

Me and Al and Pierre, the shofer, goes nearly every day and sits and looks at that big spike sticking up and thinks what a tough time that poor queen had,

they mutelayted her awful, and in another chapter I will have something to say about Napollion, he was a humdinger, he was, he was one of the seven wonders of the world, if he had of had the weight to him that bird could of licked John L. Sullivan.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### *Gargoyles*

PARIS, Sept. 18.—Well, theyer is lots of arky-texture in Paris, almost every other bldg. you see is all arkytextured up in one way or the other, I never seen so many churches in all my born days, not even in Brooklin, theyer uset to be as many breweries as theyer was churches in Brooklin but now the noes have it.

Neerly all these Paris churches is erected to the memry of Saint Somebody, or other, and for the sake of argyment this Saint was as a usual thing massicured way back in the erly days.

Theyer was Saint Denny, he must of been an Irrishman by his name, they cut his head off and he picked it up and beat it away from thare and carried his head in his hands for miles and miles, Pierre the showfure told me about it, and finally he stubbed his toe on them cobblestones and fell down, but his head kept on a rolling and a rolling and whare it stopped they erected a church to his memry.

Well, Al says, he couldn't of been an Irrishman, if he had of been an Irrishman he would have swung on somebody with that head and beaned them, you

never seen an Irishman that wouldn't of swung on somebody.

Then thare was Saint Notary Dom, his church has been all arkytextured up with gargle oils, they are sticking out over the roof of it, with theyer necks stretched and theyer mouths open, they are mean looking goofs.

Well, Al says, why do they call them gargle oils.

Doant be an iggnoramus, I told him, annybody ought to see they call them gargle oils because they are cleering theyer throats. They are carved that natural you can almost hear them hawk and spit.

I will tell the world them gargle oils are nothing to look at after a feller has had from cat to seece weeskies, you can't quit looking at them and you go and get seece more shots and look at them again and then they begin to get pursonal the way they wiggle theyer heads and wink at you.

Poor Al he gets a little bit lit up the other evening and he goes up on top of a place called Mongmart and he gets down on his hands and knees at the edge of the bluff and stretches his neck out over the city and begins to whine and bark and make noises like a trayned blood hound in a uncle Tom's cabin show.

What in the name of a hell are you doing that for Al, I asks him, you better snap out of it.

You leeve me be, Clem, he says, I am a gargle oil. I guess I got a right to be a gargle oil if I want to.

You ain't as young as you uset to be, you will have lumbague in the small of your back tomorrow morning, I tells him.

Lumbague or no lumbague, he says, I can lick any other gargle oil my size in Paris.

The only way I could get him started for home was to coax him onto the top of Pierre's taxi cab, he wouldn't get inside of it, and he stretched his self over the edge and played he was a gargle oil and I had to set on his legs to keep him from rolling off, and that way we went through all the prinssiple streets.

And Pierre would stop his cab every time we come to one of them side walk cafes, and Al would ask if any gent would like to feed the gargle oils, and purty soon some fellers we never seen afore got cabs and come along with us and played they was gargle oils too and that gargle oil parade crossed over the river and we picked up some stewdents over on the bool mish and they played they was gargle oils and it got to be quite a sport by midnight, with Al leeding the percession and evry time we come to another cafe he would say, I'm a gargle oil, I'm a gargle oil, come and throw hoops at the gargle oils, the gargle oil you ring is the gargle oil you get.

The way some Americans drink in Paris is enough to make you a frend of moderashin for life, it was 4 oclock a m in the morning afore I got that Al to bed and I says I am ashamed of you. He says you leeve me be, my shoulders is itching like wings is



starting. If it wasn't for his fool friends holding him down, he says, he would fly over the city.

Well, arkytexture is a gift, but hand painting is a tallent, you can see lots of A number 1 hand painting in Paris, the Loov is bigger than the Pennsilvania station and it is jammed full of hand paintings.

The only way I could explain how theyer come to be so much hand painting in the Loov is on account of prohibishin brakeing out in America. When they closed the bar rooms in America they must of took all the hand paintings you uset to see and shipped them right over here to the Loov, thare must be hand paintings from a thousand bar rooms in the Loov.

It makes you feel right sad to think of them miles and miles of pictures that have come down to this. Now peeple have to cross the ocean to see good hand paintings or get a drink of reel liquor, that is what prohibishin has done to us.

As for the statues, I must say most of them ain't any too modest, but what the hell, it is only stone, it doant make any difference. And you could immagin it was Angels and that would make it all o. k. and morel.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### *Strong Drink Ain't Everything*

PARIS, Sept. 20.—Well, Al says last night, I ain't saying anything against the French and I am willing to take their words for it they are the finest cooks in the world, but if I was to find myself by some merricle in Baycliff, L. Ileland, to-night I know just the kind of grub I would aim to throw my lip over.

For the sake of argyment, I says, what would you throw your lip over?

I would begin first off with a piece of punkin pie, he says, a grate big wedge of it, and I wouldn't bother to take a fork to it, neither. I would take it in the palm of my hand like I uset to when I was a kid, and flop it and eat into it. The French is a grate people, but they never been lernt nothing about punkin pie.

Next I would have a big stack of buckwheet cakes with maple sirrup onto them, and then I would have some spareribs of a hog and mebbby a peece of backbone of a hog and then I would eat another peece of punkin pie.

Then mebbby I would have some wortermillion rind perserves. And then, he says, with a kind of a

dreamy look onto the countinants of his face, then I would have a few cobs of this hear golden bantim sweet corn.

France is plumb full of pallisses and fromages and elligant tombs and frogs legs and cathedrals and good likkers and politeness, but theyer aint a cob full of honest-to-gawd golden bantim sweet corn, picked right out of the garden, in the whole place.

What next, I says.

Next, says Al, for the sake of argyment, I would eat another peece of punkin pie.

And then I would have a good, big, thick, bloody beafstake broiled the way noboddy on erth but Jake Smith can broil it, none of these hear little filleys and stakes with fussy sauces and fancy fixings, but a stake that was off a reel critter to begin with, and doant ask nothing of annybody but to be broiled a little on the outside so the juice stays into it and it just melts in your mouth.

Then I would have some coffee with reel cream into it, and then I would fill up my pipe with reel American pipe tobacco and set and smoke and think for a while, and after that if there was any more punkin pie left I would work myself outside of it.

Yes, I says, that sounds good, but for the sake of argyment, Al, if you was home, what kind of liquid damnashin could you get to drink along with that meal.

Clem, says Al, strong drink ain't evvrything in life.

Al, I says, I hate to addmit it, but it ain't.

What I been thinking of, I says, is a pot of bake beans baked the way noboddy but my old woman can bake them. She takes them beans and she picks them all over on Friday afternoon and she looks careful into the pedigree and fambly standing of each perticler bean.

Then she soaks them beans in water all night Friday night, and when she says her prayers she puts up a speshil prayer for them beans.

At 6 o'clock on Saturday morning the cat all ways mews outside the window to get in and that wakes me up and I push the old woman out of bed with my foot and she goes and lights the kitchen range and puts them beans on to bile.

She biles them slow and thoughtful all morning till 12 o'clock noon, and now and then she puts on her glasses and reads a chapter to herself out of the good book while they are biling.

And she doant let them bile so hard nor so long that they go into mush.

If they was to go into mush my old woman would feel as if she dassent look another housekeeper in Baycliff, L. Ileland, in the face for a month.

At noon she takes the big brown bean pot, and in the bottom of it she puts a layer of beans. She shreds in a little mite of onion and one bay leaf. On top of that she dribbles a layer of New Orleans mollasses. And on top of that she puts a layer of salt pork that

is half fat and half lean, and that is sliced thin, but not too thin.

Then she puts in another layer of beans about three inches deep, with a little more ravvelings of onion and another bay leaf, and then another layer of mollasses and another layer of salt pork, and she builds them layers up careful till the pot is neerly full, and the last layer on top is a thin layer of mollasses and pork.

And then from noon till 6 o'clock she bakes it slow and religious in the right kind of an oven that has had the right kind of words whispered to it.

And I'd give every monniment in Paris for a plate of them beans right now.

Shut up about them beans, Al says, I doant want my dream changed, I am a dreaming about waffles.

Well, I says, for the sake of argymnt, mebbby you and me is getting homesick.

The hell about being homesick, Al says, is that afore you can get it cured you gotto be seasick.

It's something the stomach has got to be fortified against, both homesickness and seasickness is, I says, and a part of our evening has been wasted.

Garson, he says, come dodenayre, and the gar-song, who is a right bright young feller, brought us the same as all ways.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### *Vincennes*

PARIS, Sept. 24.—Me and Al and Pierre the shofer went out to Van Sann Sunday, and in spite of its name you would be surprised that there is nothing Dutch about it, which all the Vans I ever knew on L. Ileland was dessended offen the Dutch.

Axcept if you was to make a joke about it and say it was the place whare they put them when they got in Dutch, which they was all ways doing in the early days here in France, one of theyer favorite ways of spending the Sabbath was to pull a massicure.

You never seen so many walls and castles all going away back as fur as the flood and the days of Noah. They uset to put the princes in the dungins here to ripen as you might say afore they made kings out of them, and when the old king would die in Paris they would come galluping out and say hurrah, the king is dead, long live the king. All ways theyer was one prince getting ripe in the Basteel and another prince getting ripe in Van Sann, and the one that hopped to it first after the old king died was the new king.

Theyer is a pare of big, high towers neerly as high

as the Wulwirth bldg., and on top of one of them towers there would all ways be a prince standing looking up the road to Paris hoping for news that his old man was dead, they didn't dare to let them out of the prisons in the erly days or they would of put rough on rats in the king's grub and croaked him erly, and as soon as the prince became king his two oldest sons would be put into Van Sann and into the Basteel.

And all the way between the castle at Van Sann and the Loov in Paris was a lot of small pallisses all ways full of queens and courtesians raising up new princes so as the supply of kings would not run short, and every now and then the oldest son would be pushed off the high tower and fall into the mote with a splash and when he come up a jong darm would stick a spear through him, they uset to spear princes in the moat thare like they was musk rats, and some other prince would be put in the place of the rightful heir to ripen for the throne.

The one that held out the longest was the Man in the Iron Mask, he was one of the seven wonders of the world, he lived to be as old as Meethosalem.

He was the rightful heir, and the rest was all jellus of him, they was all ways taking a wallup at that guy, but on account of that iron mask he foiled the blows, a wallop on the jaw meant nothing to that bird, he was wise to that gang of plug uglies and he never took off his mask, awake or asleep, and he was

the only prince France ever had, as fur as I can make out, that died a nacheral death for five hundred years.

First, Pierre the shofer tells us, they had the Middle Evil days at Van Sann, and then they had the Renny Song days, and Al says, for the sake of argyment, what did they sing, I bet it was something sad.

Well, I will say, by the time a king got to it, in the erly days in France, he had earnt it, and when the revolushin come along a lot of them princes must of heeved a sigh of releef and said, thank heaven, we doant have to be royalty any more.

I been getting a lot of inside dope on that French revolushin from Pierre the shofer, you put traw or cat weeskies into Pierre and the histry begins to come out of him.

He says they never dared to tell the worst about that revolushin yet or it would stop the toorist trade, but his grate grand dad went all through it and come out alive, and told it to his dad and his dad put him wise to it.

He says the Seine was so full of counts and dukes and discounts at one time it run with blood and he took us and showed us some stains on the under side of a couple of the bridges and the blood was that high, but nowadays, he says, the French doant like to have it talked about how high the blood was for fear it will give strangers a bad impreshin of the country, and he is only telling it to me and Al be-



cause we have used him right and poor boyed him frequent. But he says the truth will come out in the end in spite of the government trying to stop it, and in the name of liberty he is not afraid to tell the truth about how high the blood was, but Al says you can't trust him too fur.

You put vang into a Frenchman, Al says, and he is uset to it, and the truth will come out of him. But he ain't uset to weeskies like he is to vang, and histry comes out of him, and mebbby it is true and mebbby it is ambition.

Well, Al was a bartender most of his life, and he otto know what difrent drinks does to the difrent countries of the human race. Pierre says during the revolushin they uset to lead them dukes up to the top of the Eyefull Tower and the crowd down below would count to ten, and if the duke didn't jump when they all yelled ten he was pushed from behind.

Well, I discovered from talking with Pierre why Paris is such a cheerful town to-day, it has got to be cheerful in order to fergit its past. He showed us to-day whare that Sharlot Corday stabbed a gent in his bathtub, but what in the name of a hell she done it for I could never get out of him, probably that is something the French doant talk too much about either on account of driving away tourists.

Hold on, Al says, ain't this the left bank of the river?

It is, says Pierre, it is the reeve goash.

When did this happen, Al says.

It was a hundred and twenty yeers ago, says Pierre.

What was a bathtub doing over here on this side of the river a hundred and twenty years ago, Al says, they ain't but two of them over here now. They must of built a hotel around Sharlot's bathtub and are advertising it to-day as a modern hotel.

Well, Pierre tells us, the gent Sharlot stabbed was sick, he had a skin disease, he was taking a bath on acct. of his skin diseese.

I axcept his apollogy, Al says, garsong ongkore traw weeskies.

No sooner said than done.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### *Aquiring Culture*

PARIS, Sept. 25.—I says to Al, well, here is you and me raseing cane all over Paris, and plumb forgitting we otto get cultured. One of the things you gotto do when you come over hear is to get yourself cultured and mebbby me and you is never goanto have another chancet at it.

These Eeuropeans is all ways speeling that us Americans ain't cultured enough, and theyr is only too much truth in it.

Look at you, Al, for the sake of argyment, you wasn't cultured when you come here, and you ain't made any effort to get that way.

I ain't, ain't I, says Al, the deuce I ain't, I have too. I went and bought nearly every kind of post card we have seen yet. I am going to make an album out of them, and then if I was ever to fall by the wayside and be embraced into the holy bounds of matter-mony that album would be a hell of a nice thing to have onto the center table in the parlor, that is the kind of a thing a woman nacherally wants in the parlor.

Well, I says, half the places you bought post cards of you never went into yourself and I bet you cat

weeskies you doant know the dates of anvthing. For the sake of argyment, when was Maree Antonette born?

Well, when was she? he says.

Fourteen ninety two, I says.

Well, he says, I doant have to know myself, either the dates is on the cards or else they ain't, and I could tell you sevril things you never knowed before as dam cultured and historical as you pretend yourself to be.

Well, for instance, he says, that golden John Dark statue down there at the corner was irrected to the memry of a woman and not of a man at all, as the name impinges.

No matter what the name impinges, I says, what was it she done, can you tell me that.

She was Napollyons first wife, he says, and she was massicured in the erly days.

Go on, go on, I says, tell what for.

Go and look it up yourself, he says. Doant try to graft your culture offen me. Get some of your own. I would never of brought up the subjeck of culture myself, between two gents that is supposed to be friends, but so long as you are making such a howl about it, you better make good yourself afore you crittisiize me.

You doant know what she was massicured for, I says.

I could tell you, he says, but I doant want the



*The wings is to show she went to heaven in the end. Clem, he says, its like little Eva in Uncle Tom's Cabin; the wings is to show you you can't keep a good girl down.*



waiter to heer. Lots of these garsons understand the American and English languages. It is something the French doant like to hear furriners talk about.

Well, I tanted him, I didn't know the French took you for a furriner, the way you speak theyre lingo.

I suppose, he says, you feel proud and superrior on acct. of your iggnorance, but iggnorance is nothing to brag about. You ben in Paris a month and all the lingo you know is that weesky is the French word for whisky, and you got to order cat of them or seece of them at a time, because you have lerned cat is four and seece is six and you doant know any other numbers, you are a peeche to put up a yell about being cultured, you are.

Well, I would nacherally order from four to six of them every oncet in a while anyhow, I says, and it ain't all the French I know, I know ongkore, which means to bring cat or seece more, as the case may be.

One word led to another like that till we would of been at outs, axcept the waiter heard me say ongkore, and he brought cat more of them.

And pretty soon Al says, when they was gone, I will addmit I ain't as cultured as I otto be. Let the wimmen folks tend to that kind of stuff, they like it.

If I had some wimmen folks was stuck on being cultured I might have to smoke up and get that-away myself, but in the meantime I'd rather be comfortable.

Mebby youre right, I says, thare is poor Jake Smith. Since he made all that money in the boot-legging perfeshin and sent his dawters to that swell girls school they are hell bent for culture.

They got it themselves now, and they keep the old man mizzerable trying to make him get it. But if it was as ketching as small pok Jake would struggle against it.

If they ever get that greesy cordiroy vest offen old Jake it will be a merricle, says Al.

Yes, I says, it will, garsong ongkore cat more weeskies, you see Al, my French is coming along, and the waiter done it again.

Here's to old Jake, says Al, lifting his glass.

To old Jake, I says, doing likewise.

Just then somebody hits both of us on the shoulders and lets out a roar, saying I declare myself in on that, and we jumps up and what in the name of a hell, if it wasn't Jake Smith his self.

My dawters, he says, has drug me over here to Paris to compleat my educashin. Here, garsong, traw more weeskies toot sweet, I am learning the language fast, I kinda like it here, some owe da veeshy, garsong, toot sweet, I take a chaser after it even if Clem doant, after we have this one boys we will go whare we can put our feet onto a railing, and if you boys ain't doing anything to-night mebbly we can start in completing our educashins together.

Well, no sooner said than done.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### *Jake Smith's Declaration of Independence*

PARIS, Oct. 2.—Me and Jake Smith and Al was setting on one of the kays talking and Pierre the showfure was with us and Jake was poor boying him every now and then.

Jake can't get used to this French money and they are taking it offen him in bales here, he poor boys somebuddy evry time he turns round, his fambly is peeling big strips of it offen him and scatering it to the four winds of heaven.

Effie and Tessie, them dawters of mine, Jake says, is a goanto be the ruingation of me, they already bought so many dresses and hats here in Paris it looks like I gotto buy a ship to take that stuff home in.

Well, Jake, I says, you should worry. As long as you bootleggers and them anty-saloon leggers between you can keep prohibisin going on at home, I doant see any reason why you couldn't buy a whole flock of ships.

Clem, he says, a Bootlegger has got expenses his customers doant know anything about. The poor boying you gotto do here in Paris is nothing to the

money you gotto be paying out at home all the time to keep different parties squared and satisfied.

Them girls of mine has went and got them a French maid all ready, and they would of got one for Mother, too, but Mother won't stand for it. And only yesterday Effie come to me and says, Pa, could we have a Shattow.

They're ain't a boot legger, nor yet an anty saloon legger in America got any sweller girls than them dawters of mine, and it nearly breaks my heart to deny 'em anything, but you gotto draw the line somewhere, and I says to Effie, not if a Valet goes with a Shattow you can't have a Shattow.

If I gotto be all duded up I told Effie, I'm a goanto dude myself up with my own hands, it would be a hell of a note having a feller with a prince albert coat and spats on all ways hanging around saying Mounseer, here is your clean socks or Mounseer, your galluses is hitched onto your pants ready for you and Mounseer, the hair oil is warmed for you. A feller can be pushed too fur. If I was to waken up in the morning and find some cuss with one of these monicles in his eye setting on the edge of my bed sewing a button onto my night shirt I would reach under the bed and pick up a shoe and bean him with it.

I says to Effie, you and Tess went and buried my favorite vest in the back yard, and when the dog dug it up and brought it in, you and Tess went and

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burnt it, and you took away my comfortable shoes with the elastics in the sides, and now since I been over here I see a lot of fat old French birds wearing them kind of shoes, but I be dam if you're going to make me so efeemiate I have a Valet, a feller can be pushed too fur.

Effie says if she can have a Shattow a buttler would be enough, she wouldn't worry me any more about a Valet, only I would have to keep my finger nails clean and not use that gold toothpick mother give me last Christmas or else the butler would look down on me.

I woant have a buttler neither, I says. I seen them birds in shows, and if one of them treated me off the stage like they treat folks on the stage theyre would be trouble.

I won't have anybody working for me that is too proud and hawty to call me Jake. All my help in the old bar room called me Jake, and nobuddy too uppity to use my first name can stay on my pay roll.

I'm good natured myself and I gotto have good natured folks around me and working fur me, if they ain't I am lible to get errytated and hurt some one. Am I right, or ain't I right, boys.

You're right, Jake, me and Al says.

You dam know I'm right Jake says. And then he says, kinda sad, but right or not right, I betcha I have to give in about the buttler afore Chrissmass, the

continuyus dropping of wimmen's tears will ware away a stone. Garsong, he says, ongakore us cat more of them weeskies, toot sweet, and rustle along a demi of owe da veeshy, too.

No sooner said than done.

If I'm a goanto be drug into society, says Jake, I'm goanto be drug in on my own terms.

Yes, Jake, I says, and if they do drag you in you woant have any more time for me and Al and your old friends.

The hell I woant, Jake says, I will, too. If the wimmen woant let you into the parlor you can come and sit in the basement with me, and we can set and spit tobacco juice into the furnace and talk sensible.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### *Jake and the Loov*

PARIS, Oct. 5.—Me and Jake Smith and Al was setting in front of a place on one of the kays, with all our feet up on a table we had reserved for us, and a resting our feet, because we all got our feet sore and inflamed, Al and me been up to Mongmart walking on them cobblestones and we made the misstake of laying off weeskies and drinking some of that white burrgundy wine, which it goes to the feet, a feller otto lay off them soft drinks unless he is brought up in the country, and it was a hot day.

Jake he got his feet all swelled up running around to stores with his wimmen folks buying things and standing and waiting, and since he got so rich offen prohibishin in America his dawters woant let him wear his old easy shoes with ellastics in the sides, they throwed the last pair he owned overboard offen the ship on the way over here.

My dawters, Tessie and Effie, are hell hounding me for that Shattow, Jake says, its Shattow, Shattow, Shattow, till I can't rest, and I'm all most sorry prohibishin is such a success in America and I made so much money bootlegging.

Finally I told Effie today I would buy her a Shattow if she would only keep her mouth shut a while, but I would buy it right here in Paris if I had to buy it, right here in the heart of the town.

I wonder what they would sell me fifty yards of that long palliss over there on the other side of the river for.

You mean that one acrost there, Al says, that looks like a long string of high school buildings shoved together.

Uh-huh, says Jake, that's the one I mean, I been noticing it for a couple days now, I kinda like that place. Theres a nice yard over there by it. I would only want fifty or sixty yards of it.

I miss doubt, says Al, wether they would sell any of that palliss to a furriner.

What is it, says Jake.

It's what they call the Loov, says Al.

What's it sacred to the memory of, says Jake.

Kings, I says, a lot of 'em lived and died there.

Well, it could be aired out, says Jake.

I kinda took a fancy to the outside looks of that old dump.

If I was to buy a chunk of it, I would stick another storey or two onto the top of it, and clear out some of them old stone statues from the yard, and it would be right handy to the down town part of Paris.

And then it's right onto the river bank, too, and that would be an advantige. Whenever I took a notion to go fishing I would only have to cross the

street. And thare's plenty of room in the yard for the girls to give lawn sociables and invite as many beaus as they want.

If I gotto go into society, says Jake, and it looks damn near certain I'm a goanto be drug in wether I like it or not, I'm a goanto have something classy, but not efeemiate.

Some white and green paint would do wonders fur that building. And mebbby some of them old stone statues wouldn't look so bad, neither, if they was spruced up some with a new coat of paint.

Garsong, give us another ongkore on the weeskies.  
No sooner said than done.

And after Jake had poor boyed the garsong, he went on. If you fellers has got nothing better to do this afternoon we could get us some poles and bait and go fishing over thare in the river right now. Our feet is all blistered up, and we could rent one of the barges and take off our shoes and socks and roll our pants up and stick our feet into the water and fish and be comfortable, and hire a garsong to fetch us drinks from time to time as the need calls fur them.

No sooner said than done. And after we had set there an hour or two fishing, Jake says What I like about this Paris town is you can get comfortable here, you can do what you dam please in this town and nobody cares. I kinda like this town.

Me too, says Al.

Me too, I says.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### *Some Modern History*

PARIS, Oct. 14.—Me and Jake Smith and Al was setting at a place using of our time as usual and thinking between onkores and Al says it is getting about time to think of vittles, what are we going to eat to-night.

Right around the corner is a place where you can get something that is almost like beefsteak if you slip a poor boy to the chef, and they pomme a wicked terre in that place for you, too.

It will be a releafe to me to see you eat something, I told him, I ain't seen you open your face to receave anything but liquids for two days now, and I am getting ashamed of you.

Charity ought to commence at home, he says, and so had shamefulness. You oughto be ashamed of yourself afore you get ashamed of your betters.

Well, I says, it will surprise two men like you and Jake that has got no finer feelings, but the truth is that I am kinda ashamed of myself, I been getting that way all afternoon, I been getting so ashamed of myself that my shamefulness is spredding all over outside of myself to take in you poor mammals of



iniquity that can't rise up to being ashamed of yourself.

What is eating you, says Jake.

I lost my morrality, I says, that is what is eating me, and I nevver reealized it afore, but looking around on all these Frenchmen here drinking what they want to and obeying the legallity of their own country at the same time, I reealize that I lost my morrality.

I doant obey the law when I am at home in my own country, and I doant intend to obey the law when I get back thare, but I doant feel good over it. I wisht it had some legality that a self-respecting cittizen could obey, like these French has got. Over all theyer big lodge bldgs. here and Elks clubs, where the kings ucet to live, or whatever they are, they have got that motto chiselled into stone, liberty, legality and fraternity, which means you are at liberty to take a drink with a friend and be legal about it at the same time.

But my own country has desserted me and left me out on a limb, and I can't take a drink legal, and I feel sad about it.

I all ways wanted to be a law-abiding citizen and respect my country's laws, but when they make laws I doant stand any show of keeping I feel alone in the world and it makes me feel sad.

I love my country and I am a gonna stay away from it as long as my money holds out, for just as

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soon as I land into it again the first thing I will do is break its laws.

Well, Jake says, I never looked at it thataway myself afore this, but I guess you are right about it, garson, ongkore us traw more weeskies toot sweet.

No sooner said than done.

I looked at Al, and Al was looking mighty seerious, too, it had never struck him thataway afore neither; he had been hitting them up for two or three days, and thare was tears in his eyes.

Garson, he says, go and buy me an American flag somewhares. I want to cry over it, I just reealized I ain't got any country.

Jake, he drunk his shot of hootch, and then he ordered and drunk another one of them, and then all of a sudden he begun to sob, and he says, I ain't got any country neither and I never knowed it afore.

Here the three of us sits, and we ain't none of us got any country, we are all of us outcasts from our native land, and nothing but furrin countries and cold oceans on every side of us all the world around, garson, you gotto ongkore that last order toot sweet again.

Which the garson done it, and Jake says, sobbing into his glass, it is a hell of a struggle when a man finds his self twisted betwen his conshince and his love for his country.

Me, I am a Bootlegger, and proud of it, and my conshince tells me I otto keep right on being a Boot-

legger, so as to bring a little bit of joy and comfort into the lives of them that needs a shot of whisky now and then, and do all the good I can in the world thataway.

But on the other hand my country tells me that what I am a doing ain't legal; I am a going to keep on doing it, because it is right, and it is my lot in life, and I want to do all the good in the world that I can, but it is brakeing my heart to think that my country has desserted me, and I still love my country even if she is in the wrong and I am in the right.

Which I had a heluva time getting a passport to come over here as it was on account of a fool conviction they got on the books against me, and the only way I ever got that passport was to take hold of a Congressman by the neck and tell him you get busy and get that passport shoved through for me, or I will not only shut off your supplies of booze, but I will tell the Anti-Saloon Leggers that you doant drink the way you vote, you fellers gotto keep in with both the Bootleggers and the Anti-Saloon Leggers if you want your drinks on the one hand and your re-elections on the other. So he shoved it through. Well, I'm a gonna keep on doing what my consvince tells me is the right thing, but I love my country, and I hate being un-legal just as bad as anybody.

So Jake he put his head down onto the table and cried, and Al and me done the same, and Pierre the showfure, which had passed away an hour or so

previous, woke up and begun to cry, too, and the gar-song got worried and thought the ongkores mebbly wasn't coming toot sweet enough and he hasted more of them along, and we axcepted them, but it only made all of us cry all the worse because we was in a furrin land surrounded by oceans and our country had went back on us. I never knowed how much I loved my country till I realized I had lost her.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### *Mona Lisa*

PARIS, Oct. 15.—Come over to the Loov, Al says to me and Jake, theyr is a picture over thare Clem otto put something about into his histry of the world, it is a trick picture, nobody can guess the answer to it.

Well, I says to Al, what do you know about the histry of the world or about hand painting, and just for the sake of argyment who told you about this picture.

What the hell, he says, am I an iggnorramus just because I soshiate with iggnorramuses like you and Jake, I read about her in a Sunday suppliment back home, she was stole and the thief didn't know what she was about and brought her back again, and Pierre told me she is on view.

As a matter of fact, I says, what is her name.

Mona is her name, he says, Mona Lizzy.

Mona Lizzy what, I asks him, Lizzy ain't a last name, and what is the trick in this hand painting.

It is a last name in her case, he says, and the trick is to guess what the little dame is thinking about, she is a swell looking little dame, but she packs a

wicked eye; you can't get anywheres that eye doant follow you, they say, and for hundreds of yeers they been guessing what she meant by it, and she's got a smile that may mean yes and may mean no and may not mean a dam thing, it's a riddle and that's whare the entertainment comes in.

So we mosyed along over to take a look at this hand painting, she was a Wop lady and not French, and a girl was making a copy of her and Jake Smith, the old goof, sticks his finger onto that copy and tells the girl she isn't getting the color of the hair the same way.

Be careful, says the girl, that paint isn't dry yet.

Oh, that doant make no difference, Miss, says Jake, doant apologize, I doant mind a little paint on my fingers, my hands aint very clean anyhow.

But you've spoiled my copy, says the girl.

That's all right, says Jake, how much is it, I will buy it offen you. She named a price and no sooner said than done, Jake give her the name of his hotel and paid for it and told her to send it around and a couple more when the paint got dry.

Now that them girls of mine is a goanto drag me into society, Jake says, I will have to pay a lot of attention to hand painting, I suppose, and go to the opery house and hear them caterwaul and stand for all them dam things like that.

Well, now, I says to Al, looking at Mona, what would you say she was thinking of.

All I will say is this, says Al, she looks to me just exactly like Herb Simpson's first wife, Nell, back in Baycliff, L. Ileland.

I know what she is thinking about, says Jake Smith, I could tell at a glance what she is thinking about, she is thinking she is got a new dress on, and she is going to have still another new dress next week, and none of the other girls she knows has got two new dresses in one week, and is kind of putting it over on the other girls, and she feels pretty good about it, I seen that very same look on both my girls faces time and again after I begun to make so much money Bootlegging and they found out it could be spent for duds, that is what she is thinking about.

She looks just exactly like Herb Simpson's first wife, Al says, again.

You fellows ain't got any finer feelings, I told them, or you would see that she is thinking of something a dam site more hifaluting and refined and holy and religious than just merely duds, I am ashamed of you.

I doant know just what it is, says I, but it ain't anything either of you galoots could understand.

Barring the difference in age and sex, I says, and in looks, I seen just that same kind of a look onto my own face in the mirror in Jake's bar room when the boys got a little bit soused and commenced to singing about Home and Mother.

She looks just exactly like Herb Simpson's first wife, Nell, Al says again.

It's duds she is thinking of, says Jake, they all ways look refined and holy and religious when they are thinking of the new outfit of duds they are going to put on and come sailing down the street to church in next Sunday.

I will leave it to this lady here, he says, pointing to the hand painting girl he had bought the copy offen, if it ain't more than likely duds she is thinking of. Let her be the judge.

But before the girl could answer Jake, Al butts in again and says, she looks just like Herb Simpson's first wife, Nell.

Who was this Nell Simpson you are speaking of, says the hand painting girl, and why do you keep insisting on bringing her in, was there some story connected with her.

Thare was, Miss, says Al, but I doant know what it is just axactly fitten for your ears, you being pretty middling young, and like as not middling inexperienced, and me being almost a perfect stranger to you I doant know as I would care to go to full lengths in telling you the story of Herb Simpson's first wife, Nell.

Which the hand painting girl tells him that conversationally speaking, and for the sake of argyment, he can go as fur as he likes, as she has got interested in Herb Simpson's first wife, Nell.

Miss, says Al, turning red, I will not go as fur as I like, but to make a long story short, I seen her the



day after she got converted at a revival meeting talking to both her husband and the preacher that converted her, and when she turned her head from her husband to the preacher she looked just like Mona here, and that was just two days afore she eloped with that preacher and left her husband and two children, she had the same look in her eyes.

Well, says the hand painting girl, if I am the judge, the eyes have it.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### *Al and the Romans*

PARIS, Oct. 20.—Well, I says to Al, me and you will be leeving here a day or two, Jake Smith and his girls is a goanto stay some time, what do you want to make your last visit to afore you go.

Is thare annything in special you want to drop a tear onto and heave a sigh over.

Well, he says, thare is the American Bars, thare must be a coupla hundred of them here, if I was to say good bye to all of them I would have to stay a month longer.

But thare is one speshil bartender in one of them American Bars somewahres within a few blocks of that big white Opery House I want to say a speshil farewell to if I can catch him without too many of his gang around.

He is a red headed bird, but if I get him right he woant care what color his head is, it will be all colors of the rane-bow, he done me a low down trick, I wisht I could remember whare that bar is, but when I left it that night I wasn't writing down names and addresses.

What espeshil night is working in your elements now, I asks him.

That night I didn't come home till the next night, Al says. I was into this red headed feller's place and I was feeling like a barrell of spoilt apples along about closing time, and I says to this feller I wisht I knowed a place where I could go and get turkish bathed till morning, I needed boiling out.

Do you know of any bath place.

Over on the other side of the river, he says, is the oldest and best known bath place in Paris.

You are pretty wobbly on your pins, you better get a taxi and pay the man and I will tell him whare to dump you out.

So he took all the franks I had, because I couldn't count them, and he got a taxi, and he tells me that he will tell the man to pay for the bath and everything, and all I will have to do will be to wake up in the morning and go home, I didn't count the franks, all I could do was to hold onto things, and the next I knowed I was drowsing into a taxi cab.

Then I went plumb to sleep again, and when I next woke up it was broad daylight and the sun was shining in my face, and I was laying on the ground with a lot of old stone statues looking at me. I had slept all night onto a pile of bricks right next to whare some kind of a sewer ducks down into the ground, and thare was broken walls and ruins all around me.

I set up and scraped the mortar out of my hair, and thare was a bird setting on top of the head of an old

bald headed stone statue that had lost his nose and one of his ears was cauliflowered, and this bird says something to me, but he sung it in French and I couldn't make anything out of it except he knowed I had been plumb ineffectualized the night before.

That's all right what I been, I says to him. I know what I been, and I know how I got that way; but what I want to know now is where am I.

If the idear was to bury me, I says, they set up the moniments afore they dug the grave, they didn't have the nerve to go through with it. Then I remembered what I had heard of ineffectualized gents getting toted to meddical colleges and dissected in spots afore they woke up and I thinks that would be a heluva fate to happen to an old bartender.

But I looked down at my stummick none of it had been dissected away from me. And I looked around at a whole row of stone statues, and I never seen such mean looking goofs. I tried to get up, and my lumbague caught me in the small of my back, and I let out a yell, and all of them old stone goofs grinned. And then I heard a voice speaking to me, at first I thought it was one of them stone gents speaking, and I says to him I bet I have got the tremenses.

If I hadn't got the tremenses, you wouldn't be talking English to me, you couldn't talk English without I had the tremenses, you would be talking French.

Then I managed to get up, and the feller that had

been speeking was a young American feller, he was setting on a bench watching me.

You are in the old Roman baths, he says.

Somebody must of pulled the plug out, I says, and let the hot water run away; it's pretty chilly around here.

The plug was pulled out for the last time nearly a thousand yeers ago, he says.

I feel like I had been laying here that long, I says, and I can well beleieve you. Only you would think I would have a beard, Rip Van Winkle did. In the meantime, I says, the reel question is wether you got anything on your hip, young feller.

No, he says, but that can be easy remeddiied, thare is a place less than a block from here, and we went thare and axcepted each others invitations.

Your frends must be practickle jokers of the lowest type, he says, stearing you to them old baths.

It wasn't a frend, I says, and he is somewhares near the Opery House, I couldn't find him sober, but if I encourage my feet to get the way they was yesterday mebbby they would carry me thare of theyerselves.

So we encouraged our feet all that day, and finally along about dusk they took me into that same place, and I tried to bean that red-headed bartender, but I had had so much encouragement I wasn't any match for him, he blacked my eye.

But if I can find that place and that goof again

when I am feeling myself he is the only one that I want to bid a sweet farewell to.

So we are going looking for him, Al and me, and if we was to miss the ship and not be heard of for some time you would know whare we was and what we was doing.

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### *The Fall of Jericho*

WELL, to go back to the early days of the world all the big towns had walls around them, and this town of Jerrycho I am going to tell you about was no axceptions to the rule. For the sake of argyment we will say that as a matter of fact the walls of Jerrycho was one of the seven wonders of the world.

I never seen nothing here in Baycliff, L. Ileland, like them walls must of been, according to the Good Book, nor yet in N. Y. City, for every oncet in a while theyer was a tower sticking up higher than the walls that was twicet as high as the Woolworth bldg., and that was whare they got the idea from for these hanging gardens of Babbylun that so many peeple was hung in during the erly days of the world.

The king would set up in one of them towers with a spy glass and if he seen a reformer kicking up trubble or one of these here prohibishinists he would hang him from one of them towers. Well, that would be a good thing right here in Baycliff, L. Ileland; I often wished I was setting in one of them towers; theyer is a lot of buisyboddies right here in Baycliff I would

hang from them towers higher than they hung Hymen.

Jerrycho was a grate place for kings and queens and concordbynes in the erly bygone days of the world. They uset to set up onto them walls all begarmented and begarbaged up in purple and fine linnens, a fanning of themselves with peacock feather fans, and every now and then they would say, What, ho! port cullis, give us a shot of the pre-war stuff, and the port cullis would come running with the jug, and if you would of mentioned prohibishin to that gang of royalty one or more would of forgot his or her self long enough to of beaned you.

Every day theyer would be foot races and sack races and egg races on top of the walls of Jerrycho, and the kings would gallup theyer charyits along the walls with theyer long golden beerds floating in the sun, and the foam of the beveridges they imbibed floating from the beerds, and the queens and the concordbynes cheering on the races and waving theyer hankercheefs and fans, and every evening it was like a Forth of July celibrashin on the walls of Jerrycho.

Oncet this here king Davis was setting on the walls of Jerrycho and he seen Ury's wife taking her bathing lessons and he up and married her just like that, but that is a part of my history of the world I will tell later on.

Well, theyer was only one thing wrong with them



people that lived behind the walls of Jerrycho as fur as I can find out. They was good sports, but they was heethens. They worshiped Idles, and the Children of Izzryel and all the Beegat tribes was shocked to think they worshiped Idles. And the Beegats says to themselves, We gotto kill all them heethen Jerrychos and take all theyer country away from them and theyer swell cloathes and theyer plug hats with the dimond bands around them and other preshus stones and theyer gold and silver and all theyer wives and concordbynes, what in blazes, theyer wicked people, they worships Idles.

Seeing them heethen kings in theyer fancy cloathes having theyer Roamun charyot races on top of the walls of Jerrycho made the Children of Izzryel madder and madder as time went on. For they was all spangled up with tights and they would be doing tumbling and contortions and jumping threw hoops and swinging from trapeezes and turning fancy summersets over elephants and girafes every evening on top of the walls of Jerrycho. They had a purty good time until the Beegats come along, the only thing they ever stopped for was to have theyer meals and to worship theyer Idles.

Well, them Idles must of been some sights at that. They was made out of gold and silver and had flames of fire shooting out of them, and dimonds for theyer eyes, and they was dressed in silks and satins and peacock fethers and they set onto platforms with

wheels onto them, and trayned lions and tigers and zebras uset to pull them along the tops of the walls of Jerrycho like in a circus parade.

And if you asked one of them Idles anything, first he give a belch of fire, and the smoke come outen his ears, and then he made a noise like thunder, and then if you was a heethen he answered your question to the best of his abbility, but if you was one of the Beegats he would give you the razzberry and then iggnoar you.

King Joshaway, the king of the Children of Izzryel and all the Beegat tribes, he give them walls of Jerrycho the oncet over, and he says it ain't likely we could conquer them by any ordinary meens; we got to pull something strange and peculiar and religious against them heethens, fellow citizens, what shall it be?

Then one of the old peetryarchs of Izzryel says, Yure Majisty, them heethens is all the time parading. For the sake of argyment, yure Majisty, we will say that like cures like, what is the matter of pulling a parade of our own that will lay over theyer parade?

No sooner said than done.

For forty days and forty nights the children of Izzryel and all the Beegat tribes paraded round and round the walls of Jerrycho, and the heethens sat onto the walls and watched them. Round and round went the Beegats, and purty soon the heethens begun to get dizzy watching them. And round and round

went the Beegats, and the heethens begun to get dizzier and dizzier, and finally along about the twentieth day some of the heethen's lions and tigers and zebras jumped off the walls and joined the Beegat parade.

And round and round they went, and then in a couple of days more some of the charyit racers and tumblers sneaked down and joined the big Beegat show, and round and round they went, the heethens turning theyer heads all the time and getting dizzier and dizzier, and faster and faster went the Beegats, and more and more heethens got sucked into the Beegat parade just like leaves getting sucked into a whirlpool.

And the sun come up and the sun went down, and round and round went the Beegats, faster and faster, and the big towers like the Woolworth bldg. begun to shake and turn, and two or three queens and concordbynes slid down the wall at night and joined the Beegats, and round and round they went, and the moon come up and the moon went down, and the heethens looked up to the heavens and the stars was whirling round and round like fireflies, and faster and faster went the Beegats, and the heethens looked at the clock steeple on theyer city hall and it was spinning like a top, and round and round went the Beegats, faster and faster, and the peecocks of Jerrycho screamed and fell off the walls, and faster and faster went the Beegats, and the heethen Idles begun to tumble off theyer carts and spin on theyer

ears without a word to say for theyer selves, and round and round went the Beegats, and on the thirty-fifth day everybody noticed that the whole town of Jerrycho was spinning and whirling, and the walls was getting shakier and shakier, and the kings was staggering when they tried to walk and grabbing each other by theyer long golden beards to stiddy theyer selves, and round and round went the Beegats, and the whole thing spun faster and faster and faster, more and more heethens rolling from the walls into the Beegat parade, and at high noon on the fortieth day this here King Joshaway stops short and digs his heel into the ground and gives a blast on his trumpet.

Every Beegat does the same and the parade stopped in its tracks. But the walls and town of Jerrycho couldn't stop that quick, they went spinning on and on, and they went twisting up and up and up into the sky like a dust whirl in a storm, up and up and round and round, and then down they come with a crash, and the deed was done. And for two hours afterwards out of the sky it rained Idles and plug hats with dimond crowns onto them and concord-bynes and kings in spangled tights down into the Beegat camp.

Well, says King Joshaway, am I one of the seven wonders of the world, or ain't I?

And all the peetryarchs of Izzryel says, Yure Majisty, we will say you are.

This Joshaway was quite a bird, and one day in Jake Smith's bar room Jake and me and Al the bartender and Hennery Withers was discussing could he of licked John L. Sullivan or couldn't he?

Hennery Withers is a darn little athyiss, he doant beleave anything, he is all the time asking you where did Cain get his wife, and he says theyer never was any King Joshaway. I fetched him a lick on the ear and I says to him when they picked him up, You have been struck down by the hand that oncet shook the hand of John L. Sullivan, and the hand of a man that beleaves the Book from cover to cover, and if you ever say another word against eether John L. Sullivan or King Joshaway I will make another razzberry pudding out of yure other ear. One thing I can't stand for is these iggnerammusses doubting what is in print.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### *The Orricles of the Erly Days*

WELL, speaking of the erly days of the world, they had a good deal more time in those days for enjoyment, and guessing riddles, and interrupting dreams, and playing sharades, and talking to these here spinxes, and working out puzzles, and tearing loose generilly, and if you had said prohibishin to one of them old sooth stayers that sooth stayer would of combed his long yeller hand through his long white beerd and turned his peercing eyes onto you and muttered something, and where would you of been?

All the prominent peetryarchs and fairoes and kings and coorteesyans and umpires, in the erly days of the world, all ways kept around the palliss a whole crowd of these sooth stayers and dream interrupters and wizzards and orricles and slite of hand workers; and if the plumbing busted or there was handwrichting onto the wall or one of the queens et something and had a dream, the peetryarch or the umpire as the case might be would say to the port cullis, What ho! port cullis, call in the sooth stayers, we are a-goanto pull a party, oil up the spinxes, just for

the sake of argyment I am a-goanto see what it means; mebbly Fate is a-brooding again, something is a-goanto be hatched. And if you had of said anything to one of them old birds about Evalooshin having something to do with histry, or men being dessened offen monkeys, they would of nicked your bean, there wasn't any athyisses in those days, they was all cover to cover men.

One of the most prominent sooth stayers was a young feller by the name of Joseph. He went into the land of Egypt without a rag to his back, and his speshilty was dreams, and before he was forty yeers old he owned everything in Egypt the fairroe's name wasn't chiseled onto, and he had such a reputashun the fairroe didn't dast to wash his neck and ears, let alone taking a full Saturday all-over bath, unless he asked Joseph about it.

Well, the erly days was the best. In the erly days they took all them dreams and proffesys serious and give riches to the man that made them. But nowadays they ain't so libberul in thare notions, half the time they laff at them, and a poor sooth stayer will stay poor.

Right here in Baycliff, L. Ileland, I seen that work out. There was Hod Renfrew was as good a sooth stayer as ever lived in the erly days, he give everybody answers and they took his advice and left him poor.

Hod had the biggest head you ever seen onto a

human being. He fell offen a windmill onto his head when he was a young feller, and his brain kept on a-growing and a-growing till it got too big for him to handle it the same as ordinary folks.

You had to hand stuff to that brain and let it take it into its machinery and work it over in its own way and not hurry it none, and be respeckful to it. And them as knowed how to be respeckful to it got thare proffit out of it.

Hod would set all day long in the summer time on a chare in front of Jake Smith's Pallis Hotel, not doing nothing but whittling and now and then ketching a fly, and in the winter time in by the stove, and sometimes his eyes would be shut and sometimes open, a-waiting for his brain to work; and when his brain worked it worked kind of independent of Hod hisself.

I seen that sooth stayer work lots of times. One day Wes Hartley comes along and says, Hod, I got a good offer for them lots of mine over to the edge of town; but thare is some talk of the raleroad coming to Baycliff; do you think I better sell now or hold for more?

Hod, he didn't answer; he just ketched a fly and let it go agin, and blinked in that way of his that made folks as didn't know him say he was an ijit.

Wes wasn't bothered; he knowed Hod's ways. He come back the next day, and the next and the next, and said the same thing, and still Hod never answered nor even looked at him.



But on the seventh day Hod give him his answer. He says, Wes, it ain't any good fer man to live alone.

Wes went and pondered and pondered that sayin' and took it to heart and went off and married Aunt Lizzie Hecksher. And it was Aunt Lizzie's lots the raleroad people bought up at a good price and give Wes considerable proffit.

Then thare was two flashy city fellers come outto Baycliff one time with a propisishin they was a goanto build a factiry, and was a-goanto sell stock into it to all us Baycliff folks, and some was for it and some was agin it. And right in the midst of the excitement Old Miz Plunkitt come waddling down Main Street and she seen Hod and says to him, Hod, last night I drempt that peacock of mine tried to swim acrost Harley Mason's duck pond and got drowned, what does that mean?

Hod never said a word, only blinked his eyes and whittled. But a week later, to the very hour, while a lot of us was setting around paying no attention to him, he jumped up all of a sudden and says, Miz Plunkitt, Miz Plunkitt, I ask you, does fine feathers make fine birds?

That set us all to thinking, and pretty soon Jake Smith says, Hod means them city fellers with their factiry skeme is too fine drest to be honest, and I been a-thinking that myself.

Me, too, says Hennery Withers.

And when Hod's interruption of that dream got

around town it knocked the factiry skeme flatter than a pancake, and probibly saved thousands and thousands of dollars to us Baycliff folks.

Well, one day Hod and me was setting in Jake Smith's place and I was a-taking a nip, Hod he never drunk much, and I was feeling pretty good and I says to him, Hod, to what do I owe my suksess in life?

I forgot about asking him, but the next Sattirday Hod says to me, Clem, once you put your hand to the plow you never turned back.

I pondered that and I pondered that in my heart and I seen he was right. I started to take a nip now and then when I was a young feller, and I resisted all temptashins to sine the pledge and quit it, my natcher all ways held me to it. And all ways being around the barroom was what I owe my suksess in life to. Thare ain't any place like the old fashion pre-prohibishin bar room uset to be to make friends in, and evry time I sold a few akers of the land my dad left me I would all ways blow the gang to drinks in the barroom, and that made me more and more friends. So when I happined to be busted all ways I could go in thare and say, Jim or Jake or Pete, as the case might be, for the sake of argyment, will you lend me ten dollars. And all ways get from 75 cents to 2 dollars that way. And all ways was in touch with big bizness deals, and all ways had friends to talk over my inventions with, through being in the

barroom so much. So I seen Hod was right. I owed my suksess in life to oncet I put my hand to the plow I never turned back.

Well, a sooth stayer like that is vallible to a town, and in the erly days he was all ways appreshiated, but in these modern times Sience has crept in and everybody is talking about Evalooshin and men being dessened offen monkeys and fool stuff like that, and they ain't appreshiated any more. Poor Hod has got nothing now but his brain, and what folks gives him, but in the erly days he would of been some umpire's right hand man.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### *David and Uriah's Wife.*

ONE day, in the erly bygone days of the world, King David was setting on top of the city wall after his dinner, singing psalms about this and that and the other thing and playing onto his harp, and his port cullis was poreing him out a hooker of the old pre war stuff every now and then and the king notised a lady in a naybering back yard.

Good gracious, port cullis, says the king, come here a minute and take this spy glass.

Yes, yure Majisty, says the port cullis. And no sooner said than done.

Port cullis, says King David, what in the world is that lady doing?

Well, yure Majisty, says the port cullis, for the sake of argyment I would say that lady was getting reddy to take a bath.

A person would think so, port cullis, says king David, a person would think so indead. For the sake of argyment, port cullis, is that lady one of my queens or ain't she?

No, yure Majisty, says the port cullis, I would say, giving her the oncet over, she hasn't got a job around

the pallis. She doant belong to the royyal fambly yet.

Port cullis, says his Majisty, what do you mean by *yet?*

I mean that mebbly she will soon according to all signs, says the port cullis.

King David he wiped his mouth onto his sleeve all made of purple and fine linnen and took the oppertunity to laugh a little into his sleeve, and he says, Port cullis, you are a sad dog, you are a sly one. Is that lady anyone I ever been interduced to, do you suppose?

She appears to me when I take a look at her face to resemble Mrs. Ury, says the port cullis.

Mrs., says the king. *Mrs.*, huh! And who, for the sake of argyment, is Mister Ury?

Ury is one of yure valyant Captains, says the port cullis.

Poor feller, says the king, wiping his eyes with his other sleeve, what a pity it is he has got to die young.

Yure Majisty, if you doant know him how do you know he is young? says the port cullis.

Such a lovely lady as that one is wouldn't be wedded to any old man, says the king. I feel sad, port cullis, I feel sad when I think how likely it is that poor young Captain Ury is a goan to get killed off in the next battle. That sweet young woman down there is as good as a widow right now. I better console her about it.

Well, she ain't wearing any widow's weeds, says the port cullis.

Poor young thing, poor young thing, says his Majisty, hand me my harp, port cullis, I will play something loving and sad onto my harp, and I will sing that sweet thing a sad and loving song, and mebbby she will come over here. The world little knows how sad a king can feel about the trubbles of his peeples. If she looks up, port cullis wave to her and hand her a chaliss of the old pre war stuff and tell her it is from the king.

Well, one word led to another and purty soon the port cullis told the lady to put on a little something for the sake of argyment and come on over, for the king wished to speak to her.

No sooner said than done.

Lady, said the king, it's too bad about yure husband. But you got to lern to let bygones be bygones. It ain't any use, lady, in crying over spilt milk. A girl like you can't expeck to stay a widow very long, and the question is how would you like to join up as one of my queens.

But yure Majisty, she says, I ain't a widow, my husband is still alive.

You leave that to me, says the king, I will take care of that, what in blazes, am I a king or ain't I? That is my look out. All you got to do is to say wether you'd like to be one of my queens or not and you be careful how you answer for yure a goanto be

wether you like it or not, have another shot of the pre war stuff, now, yes or no, quick, lady.

Yes, yure Majisty, I axcept, says she.

Which, says he, the job or the hootch?

Both, says she.

That's the girl, says he, and so that night the king framed it up with one of the peetryarchs this here Ury was to get bumped off in a battle afore morning and at noon the king and Mrs. Ury become man and wife. But all the children of Izzryel begun to say they might of waited at least a week, what in blazes, they says, it looks pretty raw, king or no king, and fiannly one of the old Proffits took it up.

King, he says, I got a riddle for you. Oncet theyer was a feller had an e-wee lamb and a rich guy swiped it, what's the answer, it was all he had. The rich guy gets the hook, said the king, what in blazes, ask me something hard, I am known all over Izzryel for a king, and a psalmer and a just man, what in blazes. It's you, says the Proffit, and I'm talking of the latest queen, she that was Mrs. Ury. Well, the king repented and sung some sad songs about it, but still theyer was whisperings about it and the king uset to get fits of conscience about it, and oncet she says to him, Yure Majisty, why do you look so black, and he says to her, Damn spy glasses, I would be a happier man if I never seen a spy glass or set drinking on a wall.

Well, I seen that kind of thing happen right here

in Baycliff, L. Ileland. Pete Caldwell sent Fred Williamson down to clene out a well he was scared to go down into his self, and everybody else was scared to, the bricks was so loose; but Fred had to go, he was Pete's hired man.

And accidental one of them loose bricks fell onto Fred's bean and killed him; he was gone when they got him out of the well. Everybody in Baycliff said Pete and Myrtle, who was Fred's wife, orter waited at least a year afore they married. But nothing was ever proved onto Pete and Myrtle, nothing ever got as fur as a jury, and Pete is a rich man.

But that well was boarded up for quite awhile; neither Pete or Myrtle ever drunk any water out of it; a new well was dug. But Pete always felt sensitive about that well. One day Perry Johnson asked Pete if he didn't want to give him a job filling up that old well, and Pete turned purple in the face and rushed at Perry like a bull and knocked him down twicet.

But it must of got onto Myrtle worse than it did onto Pete, for about ten years after Fred's death they couldn't find Myrtle one day, and they looked everywhere, and it was ten days afore they found her, she had flung herself down into it. And after that Pete got to acting purty strange; he would have spells when he would laugh and talk like all get out, over to Jake Smith's place, and treat all the boys and be the



life of the party, and then all of a sudden he would turn grouchy and ugly and go home. Finally he quit seeing anybody and he built a high board fence around his place and he stayed back of it most of the time and the whole town used to wonder what he was doing.

One day he sent for Jake Smith and me and we could see he was out of his head. He says he wants us to help him with a contraption he is rigging up, and he leads us out to the well. I am fixing up a thing to dig steps from the ground clear down to the bottom of that well, boys, he says to us; I want easy steps to go down and up.

What on earth for, says me and Jake.

So Fred Williamson and his wife can climb out, says Pete. You know, boys, they been down there a long time. I can hear them down there and I want them to get out. I wake up in the nights and hear them splashing down there; they try to climb up the sides and they slip back and the bricks fall. If I could fix up a way so as they could get out, mebby I could get some good sleep. Myrtle, he says, was a right purty gal when she married Fred, and Fred was a good feller too, and it's a shame they been down that well so long.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### *Ancient Feastivities*

WELL, the trouble of the world to-day is we ain't got enough old peetryarchs like they had in the erly days of the world, those old birds was the salt of the erth and if you had of said Prohibishin to one of them he would of took the jug right down from his mouth and beaned you with it.

They was big in their idears, those old birds, What in blazes, they says, the world was made for something else besides working and toiling and slaveing all the time, let us be joyful, we ain't going to live more than six or seven hundered yeers.

And a peetryarch would set on his throne with all his flocks and herds around him and a gold crown on and his beard hanging down all clothed in purpel and fine linnen and all his wives and concordbynes to administer unto him and he would say to his faithful people, Can annybody think up a reeson to hold a barbecue?

And if nobody couldn't he would say, Well then, can annybody think up any reason why we *shouldn't* hold a barbecue? And nobody ever could.

So they would get the pits reddy and roast the

oxen and cool the home brew and the feastivities would start, with rassling matches and wheel-barrow races and climbing the greeced pole and pitching horse-shoes and striking on striking machines and fat men's races and ketching the greeced pig and singing and roarators roarating and dancing and riddles and sheerades and kissing games for the young folks and every now and then, wang! would go the bung starter and another cask would be opened, oh, what in blazes, that was the life.

They kep open house, them old peetryarchs did, and for a hundered miles around the naybors would come on their mules and cammels to a barbecue and stay till the next barbecue. They lived in tents in them days, What in blazes, they says, we want to be moving around seeing the world, theyer ain't any use of bldg. houses, you gotto be all ways swepeing the floors or something.

And sometimes over onto the horrizon would arise another cloud of dust, and another peetryarch with his mules and his cammels and his wives and concordbynes and all his famblies would heeve into sight, and the two peetryarchs would get together and hold a regular old-fashioned camp-meeting that would make an ordinery barbecue look like thirty cents.

Peetryarch Jake would say to Peetryarch Sam along about the third or fourth day of the feastivities, Well, Sam, I notiss a lot of likely looking young

yeerlings, so to speak, in your tribe, I need some more wives and everything.

Well, Jake, Peetryarch Sam would say, we might fix up a swap, I ain't been married myself for five or six weeks. Would you like to trade brides for brides, or girls for cattle and cammels, or you can take as menny as you want for nothing, what in blazes, I love you like a brother, Jake, besides they are eeting me out of house and home.

Well, Sam, Jake would say, we will swap the girls even, but as for the cammels and mules and horses they are a seeryous proposition, what we want to do with them is to get up a race meteing and bet them against each other.

No sooner said than done, and they would have cammel races and mule races till one side was clenched out entirely, and then the busted one would join the other's tribe, and it was all ways open house for evirybody. And that kind of life kep them all young and kep them libberil in their idears.

Now one reason I am writeing my Histry of the World is to coax peeple to go back to that way of living, theyer ain't enough dancing and hunting and fishing and drinking and rassling and raceing going on nowadays, and the ressalt is theyer ain't any wizdom in the world no more like in King Sollyman's time, theyer is too much work.

Some of the riddles and puzzles them old peetryarchs uset to ask ain't been answered yet because

theyer ain't enough wizdom in the world to anser them, what in blazes, evirybody is too busy nowdays to have time to get any wizdom.

I owe my suksess in life to following in the foot-steps of them old peetryarchs as much as I all ways could, I woop her up when I have the opertunity and it has kep me young.

The only feller I ever knowed personal who was like one of them old peetryarchs was old Jason Tomlinson. He died when I was a young feller neerly fifty years ago, but he was libberil in his idears the same way, he was ninety-six when he died and a tree fell onto him when he was out in the woods courting a young widder woman or he might be alive yet.

Jason inheritted for an hairloom seven or eight hundred akers of land, it come down to the shore and theyer was timber onto it, and them woods was jest full of Jason's famblies, he never let nobody put an axe into them woods, and when the raleroad came out our way he turned down big money time and again for that land. What in blazes, he would say, I doant want cash, I want a good time, and he kep open house for evirybody.

The onely Gipsies I ever knowed that quit travelin settled into Jason's woods and become one of his famblies, and some of the reemanes of that tribe of Shinnycook Injins come over and become one of Jason's famblies and married into the Gipsies more or less,

and Jason's regular angelo-saxton famblies married into both of them, and gosh the good times theyer was all ways going on into them woods! It was open house for evirybody. Some of the meels I have et there! Fish and quails and rabbits and squirls and tirtles and wild pidgins and evirything, that was the life!

And when they wanted a barl of likker they would bring in some lobsters or clams or rabbits or squirls and get enough credit to buy it with, and they didnt need much more.

What I got, says Jason, is my friends as long as I got it, and evirybody that wants to have a good time is my friend. And when he was ninety yeers old he could dance till brekfast time.

I owe a lot of my suksess in life to follering the way of old Jason Tomlinson, as fur as I was able.

Steem engines and patent churns is a-goanto be the ruination of the country, Jason uset to say, and coal mines and factries is bad for it, too.

If the peeple would all ways stick to flocks and herds and a litle eesy agerculture, and not go digging into the bowls of the erth, or bldg. up into the air, or making things into factries, and not fergit to whoop it up and go fishing a-plenty, theyer wouldn't be no trubble in the world like they is. Eviry time you dig under the surfice of the erth you get neerer to Hell.

If they was oil wells or gold mines or iron under my

land only four inches down, I wouldn't let none of my famblies dig for them; unless mebbly some of the wimmen wanted to prettify up with yeer rings or braclets offen the gold, for wimmen orter be prettified as long as they can.

What you want into life is to rest and be happy and dance and sing and have a good whoop up time, and you can't do that and be working into mines or factries. Jason he was a morel man, too, and a religious man. I heern him say to my dad one time when I was just a kid, Hawley, they's been a lot more famblies than theyer has been weddings into my woods the last nine or ten yeers, and I'm kinda worried about it. I do what I darn please about raseing famblies myself, and I know why I do it, and I got my own anser reddy for the jedgement day, but I feel responsible for the morrels of a lot of them younger peeple in the woods; I'm kinda worried about it.

Well, Jason, says my dad, why doant you get a preecher into the woods and marry them?

No sooner said than done. The very next Sunday Jason got Preecher Higgings up there and he says, Now, parson, marry them all.

Two or three hundred was all gathered into a bunch, and the parson says, Which ones to which?

Marry the whole passel of them on one bunch, says Jason, we ain't got time to waste on seprit cerremonies, this afternoon we are a-goanto hold a bar-

becue and a dance and some rassling matches, marry them in a lump.

So the parson done it, and then Jason says, Now we will trot 'em all over to the shore and baptize them in a bunch which he done it, with one cerremony.

Now, then, says Jason to his peeple, you are all married, and you are all baptized, all you got to do now is to arrange yourselves into legal famblies and live more or less religious from now on. I done my duty by you.

Hooray, grandpap, they all says, and now are we going to have the dance and barbecue?

Well, Jason was the only peetryarch I ever knowed that had come down to us as an hairloom from the erly days of the world. And if the whole country was filled up with famblies like his'n all having a good time and not working too much and whooping it up, theyer wouldn't be any labor trubbles in the country or annything.

What a country wants to be is happy and it can't be that with work and factries staring it in the face on eviry hand, it's gotto go back to erly days of the world.



THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

*A One-Act Play*

BY A. A. MILNE

*Note: Permission for amateur production must be secured by writing to  
Samuel French, 28 West 38th Street, New York City.*

## CHARACTERS

JOHN

MARY

THE HERO

THE HEROINE

THE CHIEF VILLAIN

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

THE BAD MAN

# THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

BY A. A. MILNE

*The scene is Mary's sitting room. It is the most ordinary sitting room in the world. John and Mary, two of the most ordinary people, he in the early forties, she in the late thirties, are sitting in front of the fire after dinner. He, as usual, is reading the paper; she, as usual, is knitting. They talk in a desultory way.*

MARY

Did I tell you that Mrs. Patchett had just had another baby?

JOHN (*not looking up from his paper*)

Yes, dear, you told me.

MARY

Did I? Are you sure?

JOHN

Last week.

MARY

But she only had it yesterday. Mr. Patchett told me this morning when I was ordering the cauliflower.

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JOHN

Ah! Then perhaps you told me she was going to have one.

MARY

Yes, I think that must have been it.

JOHN

This is the one that she was going to have?

MARY

It weighed seven pounds exactly.

JOHN

Of course, being a grocer he would have the scales ready. Boy or girl?

MARY

Boy.

JOHN

The first boy, isn't it?

MARY

The second.

JOHN

The first one that weighed seven pounds—exactly.

*(They are silent again, he reading, she knitting.)*

MARY

Anything in the paper to-night?

JOHN

A threatened strike of boiler makers.

MARY

Does that matter very much?

JOHN

It says here that the situation is extremely serious.

MARY

Tell me about it.

JOHN (*not very good at it*)

Well, the—er—boiler makers are threatening to strike. (*Weightily.*) They are threatening not to make any more—er—boilers.

MARY

Kitchen boilers?

JOHN (*with an explanatory gesture*)

Boilers. They are threatening not to make any more of them. And—well—that's how it is. (*Returning to his paper.*) The situation is extremely serious. Exciting scenes have been witnessed.

MARY

What sort of scenes?

JOHN

Well, naturally, when you have a lot of men threatening not to make any more boilers—and er—a lot of other men threatening that if they *don't* make any—well, exciting scenes are

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witnessed. *Have* been witnessed by this man, this special correspondent.

MARY (*after a pause*)

It's a funny thing that nothing exciting ever happens to *us*.

JOHN

It depends what you mean by exciting. I went round in ninety-five last Saturday, as I think I told you.

MARY

But I mean something really thrilling—and dangerous. Like in a novel or on a stage.

JOHN

My dear Mary, nothing like that ever happens in real life. I mean, it wouldn't happen to *us*.

MARY

Would you like it if it did?

(*He says nothing for a moment. Then he puts down his paper and sits there thinking. At last he turns to her.*)

JOHN (*almost shyly*)

I used to imagine things like that happening. Years ago. Rescuing a beautiful maiden, and—and all that sort of thing. And being wrecked on a desert island with her . . .  
(*He turns away from her, staring into his dreams.*)  
Or pushing open a little green door in a long

## THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 5

high wall and finding myself in a wonderful garden under the bluest of blue skies, and waiting, waiting—for something.

MARY

I used to imagine things too. People fighting duels because of me. Silly, isn't it? Nothing ever really happens like that.

JOHN (*still with his thoughts*)

No.

*(At this moment a Strange Man comes in. Contrary to all etiquette, he is wearing a bowler hat and an overcoat, and has a half-smoked cigar in his mouth. He walks quickly across the room and sits down in a chair, with his back to the audience. John and Mary, deep in their thoughts, do not notice him.)*

MARY (*looking into the fire*)

I suppose we're too old for it now.

JOHN

I suppose so.

MARY

If it had only happened once—just for the memories.

JOHN

So that we could say to each other— Good heavens, what's that?

## 6 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

*(It was the crack of a revolver. No mistaking it, even by John, who has never been much of a hand with revolvers.)*

MARY (*frightened*)

John!

*(There is a scuffling noise outside the door. They look eagerly toward it. Then suddenly there is dead silence. The Man in the Bowler Hat flicks some of his cigar ash on to the carpet—Mary's carpet.)*

JOHN

Look!

*(Very slowly the door begins to open. Through the crack comes a long, sinuous hand. The door opens farther, and the hand is followed by a long, sinuous body. Still the Man in the Bowler Hat says nothing. Then the door is closed, and leaning up against it, breathing rather quickly, is the Hero, in his hand a revolver. John and Mary look at each other wonderingly.)*

JOHN (*with a preliminary cough*)

I—I beg your pardon.

HERO (*turning quickly, finger to his lips*)

H'sh!

JOHN (*apologetically*)

I beg your pardon!

*(The Hero listens anxiously at the door. Then, evidently reassured for the moment, he comes toward them.)*



THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 7

HERO (*to John*)

Quick, take this! (*He presses his revolver into John's hand.*)

JOHN

I—er—what do I——

HERO (*to Mary*)

And you! This! (*He takes another revolver from his hip pocket and presses it into Mary's hand.*)

MARY

Thank you. Do we——

HERO (*sternly*)

H'sh!

MARY

Oh, I beg your pardon.

HERO

Listen!

(*They all listen. John and Mary have never listened so intently before, but to no purpose. They hear nothing.*)

JOHN (*in a whisper*)

What is it?

HERO

Nothing.

JOHN

Yes, that's what *I* heard.

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HERO

Have you got a—— (*He breaks off and broods.*)

MARY

A what?

HERO (*shaking his head*)

No, it's too late now.

JOHN (*to Mary*)

Haven't we got one?

HERO

You wait here; that will be best. I shall be back in a moment.

JOHN

What do we do?

HERO

Listen; that's all. Listen.

JOHN (*eagerly*)

Yes, yes.

HERO

I shall be back directly.

(*Just as he is making for the window the door opens and the Heroine—obviously—comes in. For a moment they stand gazing at each other.*)

HEROINE

Oh! (*but with a world of expression in it.*)

HERO

Oh! (*with even more expression.*)

HEROINE

My love!

HERO

My beautiful!

*(They meet and are locked in an embrace.)*

JOHN *(to Mary)*

I suppose they're engaged to be married.

MARY

Oh, I think they must be.

JOHN

They've evidently met before.

HERO *(lifting his head for a moment)*

My Dolores! *(He bites her neck again.)*

JOHN *(to Mary)*

I think this must be both "How do you do?"  
and "Good-bye."

MARY *(wistfully)*

He is very good-looking.

JOHN *(casually)*

Oh, do you think so? Now *she* is pretty, if you like.

MARY *(doubtfully)*

Ye-es. Very bad style, of course.

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JOHN (*indignantly*)  
My dear Mary——

HEROINE (*to Hero*)  
Quick, quick, you must go!

HERO  
Never—now that I have found you again.

HEROINE  
Yes, yes! My father is hot upon your tracks.  
He will be here at any moment in his two-seater.

HERO (*turning pale*)  
Your father!

HEROINE  
I walked on ahead to warn you. He has come  
for—*It!*

JOHN (*to Mary*)  
What on earth's *It*?

HERO (*sinking back into a chair*)  
*It!*

HEROINE  
Yes.

JOHN (*behind his hand to Mary*)  
Income-tax collector.

HERO  
The Rajah's ruby!

MARY  
Oh, how exciting!

## THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT    I I

HEROINE

Yes; he knows you have it. He is determined to wrest it from you.

HERO

Never!

JOHN

Well done!

HEROINE

There is no mischief he might not do if once it were in his possession. Three prominent members of society would be ruined, there would be another war in Mexico, and the exchange value of the ruble would be seriously impaired. Promise me you will never give it up.

HERO

I promise.

HEROINE

I must go. I am betraying my father by coming here, but I love you.

JOHN (*to Mary*)

She does love him. I thought she did.

MARY

How could she help it?

HERO

I adore you!

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JOHN

You see, he adores her too. It certainly looked like it.

MARY

I still don't think she's very good style.

HEROINE

Then—good-bye!

*(They embrace again.)*

JOHN *(after a decent interval)*

Excuse me, sir, but if you have a train to catch—I mean if your future father-in-law's two-seater is any good at all, oughtn't you to be—  
er——

HERO *(releasing Heroine)*

Good-bye!

*(He conducts her to the door, gives her a last long, lingering look, and lets her go.)*

MARY *(to herself)*

Pretty, of course, in a kind of way, but I must say I don't like that style.

*(The Hero comes out of his reverie and proceeds to business.)*

HERO *(briskly, to John)*

You have those revolvers?

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 13

JOHN  
Yes.

HERO  
Then wait here and listen. More than one life depends upon it.

JOHN  
How many more?

HERO  
If you hear the slightest noise——

JOHN (*eagerly*)  
Yes?

HERO  
H'sh!

*(He goes to the window, waits there listening for a moment, and then slips out. John and Mary remain, their ears turned attentively.)*

JOHN (*with a start*)  
H'sh! What's that?

MARY  
What was it, dear?

JOHN  
I don't know.

MARY  
It's so awkward when you don't quite know what you're listening for.

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JOHN

H'sh! We were told to listen, and we must listen. More than one life depends on it.

MARY

All right, dear.

*(They continue to listen. A little weary of it, Mary looks down the barrel of the revolver to see if she can see anything interesting.)*

JOHN *(observing her)*

Don't do that! It's very dangerous to point a loaded revolver at yourself. If anything happened it would be too late to say afterwards that you didn't mean it.

MARY

Very well, John. Oh, look!

*(Again the door opens quickly, and a sinister gentleman in a mask inserts himself into the room. We recognize him at once as the Chief Villain. Very noiselessly, his back to John and Mary, he creeps along the wall toward the window.)*

JOHN *(in a whisper)*

Father-in-law.

MARY

Do we—— *(indicates the revolver).*

JOHN *(doubtfully)*

I—I suppose—— *(He raises his gun hesitatingly.)*

MARY

Oughtn't you say something first?



JOHN

Yes—er——(*He clears his throat warningly*)  
Ahem! (*The Chief Villain continues to creep toward the window.*) You, sir!

MARY (*politely*)

Do you want anything, or—or anything?  
(*The Chief Villain is now at the window.*)

JOHN

Just a moment, sir.

(*The Chief Villain opens the window and steps out between the curtains.*)

MARY

Oh, he's gone!

JOHN

I call that very bad manners.

MARY

Do you think he'll—he'll come back?

JOHN (*with determination*)

I shall shoot him like a dog if he does (*waving aside all protests*).

MARY

Yes, dear, perhaps that *would* be best.

JOHN

Look out! He's coming back.

(*He raises his revolver as the door opens. Again the Chief Villain enters cautiously and creeps toward the window.*)

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MARY (*in a whisper*)

Shoot!

JOHN (*awkwardly*)

Er—I suppose it *is* the same man?

MARY

Yes, yes!

JOHN

I mean—it wouldn't be quite fair if——(*He coughs warningly.*) Excuse me, sir!

MARY

Quick, before he goes!

JOHN (*raising his revolver nervously*)

I ought to tell you, sir—— (*To Mary:*) You know, I still think this is a different one.

(*The Chief Villain again disappears through the window.*)

MARY (*in great disappointment*)

Oh, he's gone!

JOHN (*firmly*)

It was a different one. The other one hadn't got a moustache.

MARY

He had, John. It was the same man; of course it was

JOHN

Oh! Well, if I had known that—if I had only been certain of it, I should have shot him like a dog.

A VOICE (*which sounds like the Hero's*)

Help, help!

MARY

John, listen!

JOHN

I *am* listening.

A VOICE

He-e-elp!

MARY

Oughtn't we to do something?

JOHN

We *are* doing something. We're listening. That's what he told us to do.

A VOICE

Help!

JOHN (*listening*)

That's the other man; the one who came in first.

MARY

The nice-looking one. Oh, John, we *must* do something.

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JOHN

If he calls out again I shall—I shall—do something. I shall take steps. I may even have to shoot somebody. But I will *not* have——

A VOICE

Quick, quick!

MARY

There!

JOHN

Er—was that the same voice?

MARY (*moving to the door*)

Yes, of course it was. It sounded as if it were in the hall. Come along.

JOHN

Wait a moment. (*She turns round.*) We must keep cool, Mary. We mustn't be impetuous. Just hold this a moment. (*He hands her his revolver.*)

MARY (*surprised*)

Why, what—— )

JOHN

I shall take my coat off. (*He takes off his coat very slowly.*) I'm going through with this. I'm not easily roused, but when once——

A VOICE

Help! Quick!

JOHN (*reassuringly*)

All right, my man, all right. (*Very leisurely he rolls up his sleeves.*) I'm not going to have

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 19

this sort of thing going on in *my* house. I'm not going to have it. (*Doubtfully.*) I don't think I need take my waistcoat off too. What do *you* think, Mary?

MARY (*impatiently*)

No, dear, of course not; you look very nice.

JOHN (*very determined*)

Now, then, let's have that revolver. (*She gives it to him.*) I shall say, "Hands up!"—very sharply, like that—"Hands up!"—and then if he doesn't put his hands up I shall—I shall say, "Hands up!" again. That will show him that I'm not to be trifled with. Now, then, dear, are you ready?

MARY (*eagerly*)

Yes!

JOHN

Then——

(*But at that moment the lights go out.*)

MARY

Oh!

JOHN (*annoyed*)

Now, why did you do that, Mary?

MARY

I didn't do it, dear.

JOHN

Then who did?

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MARY

I don't know. They just went out.

JOHN

Then I shall write to the company to-morrow and complain. I shall complain to the company about the lights, and I shall complain to the landlord about the way people go in and out of this house, and shriek and——

MARY (*in alarm*)

Oh!

JOHN

*Don't* do that! What is it?

MARY

I can feel somebody quite close to me.

JOHN

Well, that's me.

MARY

Not you, somebody else. Oh! He touched me!  
John!

JOHN (*addressing the darkness*)

Really, sir, I must ask you not to——

MARY

Listen! I can hear breathings all round me!

JOHN

Excuse me, sir, but do you mind *not* breathing all round my wife?

MARY

There! Now I can't hear anything.

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 21

JOHN (*complacently*)

There you are, my dear. You see what firmness does. I wasn't going to have *that* sort of thing going on in my house.

*(The lights go up and reveal the Hero gagged so that only his eyes are visible, and bound to a chair.)*

MARY (*clinging to her husband*)

Oh, John!

JOHN (*with sudden desperate bravery*)

Hands up! (*He levels his revolver.*)

MARY

Don't be silly; how can he?

JOHN

All right, dear, I was only practising. (*He blows a speck of dust off his revolver and holds it up to the light again.*) Yes; it's quite a handy little fellow. I think I shall be able to do some business with this all right.

MARY

Poor fellow! I wonder who it is.

*(The Hero tries to speak with his eyes and movements of the head.)*

JOHN

He wants something. Perhaps it's the evening paper. (*He makes a movement toward it.*)

## 22 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

MARY

Listen!

*(The Hero begins to tap with his feet.)*

JOHN

He's signalling something.

MARY

Dots and dashes!

JOHN

That's the Morse code; that's what that is. Where's my dictionary? *(He fetches it hastily and begins to turn over the pages.)*

MARY

Quick, dear!

JOHN *(reading)*

Here we are. "1. Morse—The walrus." *(Looking at the Hero:)* No, that must be wrong. Ah, this is better! "2. Morse code signaling of telegraph operators—as 'He sends a good Morse.'"

MARY

Well? What does it say?

JOHN

Nothing. That's all. Then we come to "Morsel—a small piece of food, a mouthful, a bite. Also a small meal."



THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 23

MARY (*brilliantly*)

A mouthful! That's what he meant. He wants the gag taken out of his mouth. (*She goes to him.*)

JOHN

That's very clever of you, Mary. I should never have thought of that.

MARY (*untying the gag*)

Then! . . . Why, it's the man who came in first, the nice-looking one!

JOHN

Yes, he said he was coming back.

(*Before the Hero can express his thanks—if that is what he wants to express—the Chief Villain, accompanied by a Bad Man, comes in. John and Mary instinctively retreat.*)

CHIEF VILLAIN (*sardonically*)

Ha!

JOHN (*politely*)

Ha to you, sir.

(*The Chief Villain fixes John with a terrible eye.*)

JOHN (*nervously to Mary*)

Say "Ha!" to the gentleman, dear.

MARY (*faintly*)

Ha!

CHIEF VILLAIN

And what the Mephistopheles are you doing here?

24 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

JOHN (*to Mary*)

What are we doing here?

MARY (*bravely*)

This is our house.

JOHN

Yes, this is our house.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Then siddown! (*John sits down meekly.*) Is this your wife?

JOHN

Yes. (*Introducing them.*) Er—my wife—er—Mr. Er——

CHIEF VILLAIN

Then tell her to siddown too.

JOHN (*to Mary*)

He wants you to siddown.

(*She does so.*)

CHIEF VILLAIN

That's better. (*To Bad Man.*) Just take their guns off 'em.

BAD MAN (*taking the guns*)

Do you want them tied up or gagged or anything?

CHIEF VILLAIN

No; they're not worth it.

JOHN (*humbly*)

Thank you.

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 25

CHIEF VILLAIN

Now, then, to business. (*To Hero:*) Where's the Rajah's ruby?

HERO (*firmly*)

I shan't tell you.

CHIEF VILLAIN

You won't?

HERO

I won't.

CHIEF VILLAIN

That's awkward. (*After much thought.*) You absolutely refuse to?

HERO

I absolutely refuse to.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Ha! (*To Bad Man:*) Torture the prisoner.

BAD MAN (*cheerfully*)

Right you are, governor. (*He feels on the lapel of his coat and then says to Mary:*) Could you oblige me with the loan of a pin, mum?

MARY

I don't think—— (*Finding one:*) Here you are.

BAD MAN

Thanks. (*He advances threateningly upon the prisoner.*)

## 26 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

CHIEF VILLAIN

Wait! (*To Hero:*) Before proceeding to extremities I will give you one more chance. Where is the Rajah's Raby?

BAD MAN

You mean the Rabah's Rujy, don't you, governor?

CHIEF VILLAIN

That's what I said.

JOHN (*wishing to help*)

You *said* the Rubah's Rajy, but I think you meant the Rujy's—

CHIEF VILLAIN

Silence! (*To Hero:*) I ask you again—where is the Ruj—I mean where is the Rab—well, anyhow, where *is* it?

HERO

I won't tell you.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Proceed, Mr. Smithers.

BAD MAN

Well, you've asked for it, mate. (*He pushes the pin gently into the Hero's arm.*)

HERO

Ow!

MARY

Oh, poor fellow!

CHIEF VILLAIN

Silence! Where is—— (*The Hero shakes his head.*) Torture him again, Mr. Smithers.

HERO

No, no! Mercy! I'll tell you.

JOHN (*indignantly*)

Oh, I say!

BAD MAN

Shall I just give him another one for luck, governor?

HERO

Certainly not!

JOHN (*to Mary*)

Personally, I think he should have held out much longer.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Very well, then. Where is the Rajah's Ruby?

HERO

In the cloakroom of Waterloo Station—in a hatbox.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*doubtfully*)

In the cloakroom at Waterloo Station, you say?

## 28 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

HERO

Yes. In a hatbox. Now release me.

CHIEF VILLAIN

How do I know it's there?

HERO

Well, how do *I* know?

CHIEF VILLAIN

True. (*Holding out his hand:*) Well, give me the ticket for it.

HERO

I haven't got it.

BAD MAN

Now, then, none of that.

HERO

I haven't, really.

JOHN

I don't think he'd say he hadn't got it if he had got it. Do you, Mary?

MARY

Oh, I'm sure he wouldn't.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Silence! (*To Hero:*) Where is the ticket?

HERO

In the cloakroom of Paddington Station. In a hatbox.

CHIEF VILLAIN

The same hatbox?

HERO

Of course not. The other one was at Waterloo Station.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Well, then, where's the ticket for the hatbox in the Paddington cloakroom?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Charing Cross. In a hatbox.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*annoyed*)

Look here, how many hatboxes have you got?

HERO

Lots.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Oh! Now let's get this straight. You say that the Rajah's Ruby is in a hatbox in the cloakroom at Paddington——

HERO

Waterloo.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Waterloo; and that the ticket for that hatbox is in a hatbox in the cloakroom at Euston——

HERO

Paddington.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Paddington; and that the ticket for the ticket, which is in a hatbox at Paddington, for the Ruby which is in a hatbox at King's Cross——

30 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

BAD MAN  
Euston.

JOHN  
St. Pancras.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*angrily*)  
Oh, shut up! The ticket for the ticket, which  
is in a hatbox at Paddington, for the Ruby  
which is in a hatbox at—at——

JOHN  
St. Panc——

HERO  
Waterloo.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Waterloo, thank you. — This ticket is in a hatbox  
at—er——

JOHN  
St. Pancras.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Shut up! In a hatbox at——

HERO  
Charing Cross.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Exactly. (*Triumphantly:*) Then give me the  
ticket.



HERO

Which one?

CHIEF VILLAIN (*uneasily*)

The one we're talking about.

JOHN (*helpfully*)

The St. Pancras one.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*in a fury*)

*Will you shut up? (To Hero:) Now listen. (Very slowly and with an enormous effort of concentration:) I want the ticket for the hatbox at Charing Cross, which contains the ticket for the hatbox at (John's lips, which are forming the words "St. Pancras," are hastily smothered by the Bad Man's hand.)—at Paddington, which contains the ticket for the hatbox at Waterloo, which contains the Rajah's Ruby. (Proudly:) There!*

HERO

I beg your pardon?

CHIEF VILLAIN (*violently*)

I will *not* say it again! Give me the ticket.

HERO (*sadly*)

I haven't got it.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*in an awestruck whisper*)

You haven't got it? *!*

HERO

No.

## 32 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

CHIEF VILLAIN (*after several vain attempts to speak*)  
Where is it?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Victoria Station.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*moistening his lips and speaking very faintly*)

Not—not in a hatbox?

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*without much hope*)

And the ticket for that?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Euston.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*quite broken up*)

Also in a hatbox?

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN

How much longer do we go on?

HERO (*cheerfully*)

Oh, a long time yet.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*to Bad Man*)

How many London stations are there?

JOHN

Well, there's St. Pancras, and——

MARY

Liverpool Street.

BAD MAN

About twenty big ones, governor.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Twenty! And do we go round them all?

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN

And what do we do when we've worked through the lot?

HERO

Then we go all round them again.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*anxiously*)

And—and so on?

HERO

And so on.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*his hand to his head*)

This is terrible. I must think. (*To Bad Man:*)  
Just torture him again while I think.

BAD MAN (*cheerily*)

Right you are, governor. (*He approaches his victim.*)

HERO (*uneasily*)

I say, look here——

JOHN

I don't think it's quite fair, you know——

MARY (*suddenly*)

Give me back my pin!

## 34 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

BAD MAN

Must obey orders, gentlemen. (*Coaxingly to Hero:*) Just a little way in (*indicating with his finger*)—that much.

JOHN (*to Mary*)

I think perhaps "that much" wouldn't matter.  
What do——

CHIEF VILLAIN (*triumphantly*)

I've got it! (*He rises with an air, the problem solved. They all look at him.*)

JOHN

What?

CHIEF VILLAIN (*impressively to Hero*)

There is somewhere—logically, there must be  
somewhere—a final, an ultimate hatbox!

JOHN

By Jove! That's true!

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Where *is* that hatbox?

JOHN

St. Pancras.

CHIEF VILLAIN

Shut up! (*To Hero:*) Where is that hatbox?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Charing Cross.

## THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT 35

CHIEF VILLAIN

Ah! (*He holds out his hand.*) Then give me the ticket for it.

BAD MAN (*threateningly*)

Come on, now! The ticket!

HERO (*shaking his head sadly*)

I can't.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*almost inarticulate with emotion*)

You don't mean to say as you've—lost—it?

HERO (*in a whisper, with bowed head*)

I've lost it.

*(With a terrible shriek the Chief Villain falls back fainting into the arms of the Bad Man. Instinctively John and Mary embrace, sobbing to each other, "He's lost it!" And at that moment the Heroine rushes in, crying, "My love, you've lost it!" and puts her arms around the Hero. Only the Man in the Bowler Hat remains unmoved. Slowly he removes the cigar from his mouth and speaks.)*

BOWLER HAT

Yes. . . . That's all right. Just a bit ragged still. . . . We'll take it again at eleven to-morrow. Second Act, please.

*(And so the rehearsal goes on.)*

CURTAIN



“DOLLING”

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

*from “Women”*





## I

### MRS. DODGE'S NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOUR

**A**T FIVE o'clock upon a February afternoon the commodious rooms on the lower floor of Mrs. Cromwell's big house resounded with all the noise that a hundred women unaided by firearms could make. A hundred men, gathered in a similar social manner, if that were possible, might either be quiet or produce a few uproariously bellowing groups, a matter depending upon the presence or absence of noisy individuals; but a hundred habitually soft-voiced women, brought together for a brief enjoyment of one another's society and a trifling incidental repast, must almost inevitably abandon themselves to that vocal rioting ultimately so helpful to the incomes of the "nerve specialists."

The strain, of course, is not put upon the nerves by the overpitched voices alone. At times during Mrs. Cromwell's "tea" the face of almost every woman in the house was distressed by the expression of caressive animation maintained upon it. The

most conscientious of the guests held this expression upon their faces from the moment they entered the house until they left it; they went about from room to room, from group to group, shouting indomitably; and, without an instant's relaxation, kept a sweet archness frozen upon their faces, no matter how those valiant faces ached.

Men may not flatter themselves in believing it is for them that women most ardently sculpture their expressions. A class of women has traduced the rest: those women who are languid where there are no men. The women at Mrs. Cromwell's "tea," with not a man in sight, so consistently moulded their faces that the invitations might well have read, "From Four to Six: a Ladies' Masque."

What gave most truly the colour of a masquerade was the unmasking. This, of course, was never general, nor at any time simultaneous, except with two or three; yet, here and there, withdrawn a little to the side of a room, or near a corner, ladies might be seen who wore no expression at all, or else looked jaded or even frostily observant of the show. Sometimes clubs of two seemed to form temporarily, the members unmasking to each other, exhibiting their real faces in confidence, and joining in criticism of

the maskers about them. At such times, if a third lady approached, the two would immediately resume their masks and bob and beam; then they might seem to elect her to membership; whereupon all three would drop their masks, shout gravely, close to one another's ears, then presently separate, masking again in facial shapings designed to picture universal love and jaunty humour.

But among the hundred merrymakers there was one of whom it could not be said that she was masked; yet, strange to tell, neither could it be said of her that she was not masked; for either she wore no mask at all or wore one always. Her face at Mrs. Cromwell's was precisely as it was when seen anywhere else; though where it seemed most appropriately surrounded was in church.

Calm, pale, the chin uplifted a little, with the slant of the head always more toward heaven than earth, this angelic face was borne high by the straight throat and slender figure like the oriflamme upon its staff; and so it passed through the crowd of shouting women, seeming to move in a spiritual light that fell upon them and illuminated them, yet illuminated most the uplifted face that was its source. Moreover, upon the lips the exquisite promise of a smile was

continuously hinted; and the hint foreshadowed how fine the smile would be: how gentle, though a little martyred by life, and how bravely tolerant.

The beholder waited for this promised heavenly smile, but waited in vain. "You always think she's just going to until you see her often enough to find she never does," a broad-shouldered matron explained to two of her friends at Mrs. Cromwell's. The three had formed one of the little clubs for a temporary unmasking and were lookers-on for the moment. "It's an old worn-out kind of thing to say," the sturdy matron continued;—"but I never can resist applying it to her. Nobody can ever possibly be so good as Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite looks. I'll even risk saying that nobody can ever possibly be so good as she seems to behave!"

"Oh, Mrs. Dodge!" one of the others exclaimed. "But isn't behaviour the final proof? My husband says conduct is the only test of character."

"He doesn't know what he's talking about," the brusque Mrs. Dodge returned. "When we do anything noble, it's in spite of our true character; that's what makes it a noble thing to do. I've lived next door to that woman for five years, and, though I seldom exchange more than a word with her, I can't

help having her in my sight pretty often. She always looks noble and she always sounds noble. Even when she says, 'Isn't it a lovely day,' she sounds noble—and, for my part, I'm sick and tired of her nobility!"

"But my husband says——"

"I don't care what Mr. Battle says," Mrs. Dodge interrupted. "The woman's a nuisance!"

"To me," said the third of the group, gravely, "that sounds almost like sacrilege. I've always felt that even though Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite is still quite a young woman, she's the focus of spiritual life for this whole community. I think the people here generally look upon her as the finest inspiration we have among us."

"I know they do," Mrs. Dodge said, irritably. "That's one reason I think she's a pest. People are always trying to live up to her, and it makes cowards and hypocrites of 'em. Look at her now!"

Mrs. Braithwaite had reached the hostess, who was shouting in concert with several new arrivals; but when Mrs. Braithwaite appeared, the voices of all this group were somewhat lowered (though they could not be lowered much and hope to be audible) and, what was more remarkable, Mrs. Cromwell's expression and her manner were instantly altered

perceptibly:—so were the expressions and manners of the others about her, as Mrs. Dodge vindictively pointed out.

“Look at that!” she said. “Every one of those poor geese is trying to look like *her*;—they feel they have to seem as noble as she is! Instinctively they’re all trying to take on her hushed sweetness. Nobody dares be natural anywhere near her.”

“But that’s because of the affection people feel for her,” Mrs. Battle explained. “Don’t you feel——”

“Affection your grandmother!” the brusque lady interrupted. “What are you talking about?”

“Well, reverence, then. Perhaps that’s the better word for the feeling people have about her. They know how much of her life she gives to good works. She’s at the head of——”

“Yes, she certainly is!” Mrs. Dodge agreed, bitterly. “She’s the head and front of every uplifting movement among us. You can’t open your mail without finding benefit tickets you have to buy for some good cause she’s chairman of. She’s always the girl that passes the hat: she’s the one that makes us feel like selfish dogs if we don’t give till it hurts! She’s the star collector, all right!”

“Well, oughtn’t we to be grateful that she takes such duties upon herself?”

“Do we ever omit any of our gratitude? Why, the papers are full of it: ‘It is the sense of this committee that, except for the noble, unflagging, and self-sacrificing devotion of Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite, this fund could never have reached the generous dimensions necessary for the carrying on of this work. Therefore, be it resolved that the thanks of this entire organization’—and so forth. And, as a matter by the way, you never hear whether she gave any of the fund herself.”

“She gives time. She gives energy. Mr. Battle says, ‘Who gives himself gives all.’ Mrs. Braithwaite gives herself.”

“Yes, she does,” Mrs. Dodge agreed. “It’s her form of recreation!”

Her two auditors stared at her incredulously, so that she could plainly see how shocked they were; but, before either of them spoke, a beautiful change in look and manner came upon them. Both of them elevated their chins a little, so that their faces slanted more toward heaven than toward earth; both of them seemed about to smile angelically, but stopped just short of smiling; a purified softness

came into their eyes; and, altogether, by means of various other subtle little manifestations, the two ladies began to look noble.

Mrs. Dodge had turned her back toward the group about the hostess, but without looking round she understood what the change in her two companions portended. "Good-bye, ladies of Shalott," she said. "The curse has come upon you!" And she moved away, just as the ennobled two stepped forward to meet Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite in her approach to them.

"Clever of me!" Mrs. Dodge thought, with some bitterness. "Getting myself the reputation of a 'dangerous woman'!" For she understood well enough that she would do no injury to Mrs. Braithwaite in attacking her;—on the contrary, the injury would inevitably be to the assailant; and yet Mrs. Dodge could not forbear from a little boomerang practice at this shining and impervious mark. The reason, unfortunately, was personal, as most reasons are: Mrs. Dodge had come to the "tea" in an acute state of irritation that had been increasing since morning. In fact, she had begun the day with a breakfast-table argument of which Mrs. Braithwaite was the subject.



Mr. Dodge made the unfortunate admission that he had recently sent Mrs. Braithwaite a check for a hundred dollars, his subscription to the Workers' Welfare League; and he was forced into subsequent admissions: he had no interest in the Workers' Welfare League, and could give no reason for sending a check to it except that Mrs. Braithwaite had written him appealing for a subscription. She was sure he wouldn't like to miss the chance to aid in so splendid a movement, she said. Now, as Mrs. Braithwaite had previously written twice to Mrs. Dodge in almost the same words, and as Mrs. Dodge had twice replied declining to make a donation, the argument (so to call it) on Mrs. Dodge's part was a heated one. It availed her husband little to protest that he had never heard of Mrs. Braithwaite's appeals to his wife; Mrs. Dodge was too greatly incensed to be reasonable.

Later in the day she was remorseful, realizing that she had taken poor Mr. Dodge for her anvil because he was within reach, and what she really wanted to hammer wasn't. Her remorse applied itself strictly to her husband, however, and she had none for her feeling toward the lady next door. Mrs. Dodge and her neighbour had never discovered

any point of congeniality: Mrs. Braithwaite's high serenity, which Mrs. Dodge called suavity, was of so paradoxical a smoothness that Mrs. Dodge said it "rubbed the wrong way from the start." The uncongeniality had increased with time until it became a settled dislike, so far as Mrs. Dodge was concerned; and now, after Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's successful appeal to Mr. Dodge for what Mr. Dodge's wife had refused, the dislike was rankling itself into a culmination not unlike an actual and lusty hatred.

Mrs. Dodge realized her own condition;—she knew hatred is bad for the hater; but she could not master the continuous anger within her. Fascinated, she watched Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite at the "tea"; could not help watching her, although, as the victim of this fascination admitted to herself in so many words, the sight was "poison" to her. Nor was the poison alleviated by the effect of Mrs. Braithwaite upon the other guests: everywhere the angelic presence moved about the capacious rooms it was preceded and followed by deference. And when Mrs. Braithwaite joined a woman or a group of women, Mrs. Dodge marked with a hot eye how that woman or group of women straightway hushed a little and looked noble.

## II

### MRS. DODGE DECLINES TO TELL

MRS. DODGE went home early. "I oughtn't to have come," she told her hostess, confidentially, in parting. "I try to be a Christian sometimes, but this is one of the days when I think Nero was right."

"But what——"

"I may tell you—some day," Mrs. Dodge promised, and gloomily went her way.

At dinner that evening she was grim, softening little when her husband plaintively resumed his defence. Lily inquired why her mother was of so dread a countenance.

"Me," Mr. Dodge explained. "It began at breakfast before you were up, and it's the old culprit, Lily."

"I guessed that much," Lily said, cheerfully. "I haven't been falling in love with anybody foolish for three or four months now; and that's the only thing *I* ever do to make her look like this, so I knew it must be you. What you been up to?"

"Aiding in good causes," he answered, sighing. "She hates me for helping the Workers, Lily. Our next-door neighbour appealed to Cæsar, over your mother's head. I've explained two or three hundred times that I didn't know there'd been any previous request to her; but she hates my wicked plotting just the same."

"No. I only hate your weakness," Mrs. Dodge said, not relaxing her severity. "You were so eager to please that woman you couldn't even wait to consult your wife. Her writing to you and ignoring what I'd twice written her was the rudest thing I've ever had done to me, and your donation puts you in the position of approving of it. She did it because she's furious with me, and so——"

But Lily interrupted her. "Mamma!" she exclaimed. "Why, you're talking just ridiculously! Everybody knows Mrs. Braithwaite couldn't be 'furious.' Not with anybody!"

"Couldn't she? Then why did she do such an insulting thing to me? Don't you suppose she knows it's insulting to show she can get a poor silly husband to do something his wife has declined to do? Is there a cattier trick in the whole cattish repertoire? She did it because she's the slyest puss in this com-

munity and she knows I know it, and hates me for it!"

Lily stared in the blankest surprise. "Why, it just sounds like anarchy!" she cried. "I never heard you break out like that before except when you were talking about some boy I liked! When did you get this way about Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite?"

"I've never liked her," Mrs. Dodge said. "Never! I've always suspected she was a whited sepulchre, and now I've got proof of it."

"Proof? That's quite a strong word, Lydia," Mr. Dodge reminded her.

"Thank you!" she said. "I mean exactly what I'm saying. Mrs. Braithwaite did this thing to me out of deliberate spitefulness; and she did it because she knows what I think of her."

"But you said you had 'proof' that she's a 'whited sepulchre,'" he said. "The word 'proof'——"

"May we assume that it means reliable evidence reliably confirmed?" Mrs. Dodge asked, with satirical politeness. "Suppose you've done something disgraceful and another person happens to know you did it. Then suppose you play a nasty trick on this other person. Wouldn't it be proof that you hate

him because he knows you did the disgraceful thing?"

"I'm afraid I don't follow you," Mr. Dodge said, uncomfortably. "When did I ever do this disgraceful thing you're talking about? If it's actually disgraceful to subscribe a hundred dollars to the Workers——"

"I'm not talking of that," his wife said. "I'll try to put it within reach of your intellect. Suppose I know Mrs. Braithwaite to be a whited sepulchre; then if she does an insulting thing to me, isn't that proof she's furious with me for finding her out?"

"No," he answered. "It might incline one to think that she resented your poor opinion of her, but it doesn't prove anything at all."

"Doesn't it? You wouldn't say so if you knew what I know!"

Lily's eyes widened in hopeful eagerness.

"How exciting!" she cried. "Mamma, *what* do you know about Mrs. Braithwaite?"

"Never mind!"

"But you said——"

"I said, 'Never mind'!"

"But I do mind!" Lily insisted. "You haven't

got any right to get a person's interest all worked up like that and then just say, 'Never mind'!"

"That's all I *shall* say, however," Mrs. Dodge informed her stubbornly, and kept to her word, though Lily continued to press her until the meal was over. Mr. Dodge made no effort to aid his daughter in obtaining the revelation she sought;—he appeared to be superior to the curiosity that impelled her; but this appearance of superiority may have been only an appearance: he may have foreseen that his wife would presently be a little more explicit about what she had implied against their neighbour.

In fact, Lily had no sooner gone forth upon some youthful junketing, immediately after dinner, than symptoms of forthcoming revelation were manifested. Mr. Dodge's physician allowed him one cigar a day, and it had just begun to scent the library.

"I suppose, of course, you're condemning me for a reckless talker," Mrs. Dodge said. "You assume that I'm willing to hint slander against a woman with only my own injury for a basis, instead of facts."

"On the contrary, Lydia," he returned, mildly, "I know you wouldn't have said what you did unless you have something serious to found it on."

Probably she was a little mollified, but she did

not show it. "So you give me that much credit?" she asked, sourly. "I imagine it's because you're just as curious as Lily and hope to hear what I wouldn't tell her. Well, I'm not going to gratify your curiosity."

"No?" He picked up a magazine from the table beside his chair, and began to turn over the pages. "Oh, very well!"

"I *am* going to tell you *something*, though," she said. "It's because I think you ought to be told at least *part* of what I know. It may be good for you."

"For me?" he inquired, calmly, though he well understood what she was going to say next.

"Yes; you might find it wiser to consult your wife next time, even when you're dealing with people you think are saints."

"Why, I don't think Mrs. Braithwaite's a saint," he protested. "She *looks* rather like one—a pretty one, too—and the general report is that she *is* one; but I don't know anything more than that about her. She happens to be a neighbour; but we've never had the slightest intimacy with her and her husband. We've never been in their house or they in ours; I bow to her when I see her and sometimes



exchange a few words with her across the hedge between our two yards, usually about the weather. I don't think anything about her at all."

"Then it's time you did," Mrs. Dodge said with prompt inconsistency.

"All right. What do you want me to think about her, Lydia?"

"Nothing!" she said, sharply. "Oh, laugh if you want to! I'll tell you just this much: I found out something about her by pure accident; and I decided I'd never tell anybody in the world—not even you. I'm not the kind of person to wreck anybody's life exactly; and I decided just to bury what I happened to find out. What's more, I'd have kept it *all* buried if she'd had sense enough to let me alone. I wouldn't even have told you that I know something about her."

"It's something really serious?"

"'Serious'?" she said. "No, it's not 'serious.' It's ruinous."

Mr. Dodge released a sound from his mouth. "Whee-ew!" Whistled, not spoken, it was his characteristic token that he found himself impressed. "You've certainly followed the right course, Lydia. Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's standing isn't just a high

one; it's lofty. I shouldn't care to be the person who blasts that statue off its pedestal;—sometimes statues crush the blasters when they fall. I'm glad you kept your information to yourself." He paused, and then, being morally but an ordinary man, he added, "Not—not that I see any particular harm in your confiding in my discretion in such a matter."

"Didn't I explain I'm not confiding in your discretion?" Mrs. Dodge returned. "Lately, I don't believe you have any. I've told you this much so that next time you won't be so hasty in sending checks to women who are merely using you to annoy your wife."

He sighed. "There's where you puzzle me, Lydia. If you found out something ruinous about Mrs. Braithwaite, as you say, and if she knows you did—you intimated she knows it, I think?"

"Absolutely."

"Then I should think you'd be the last person in the world she'd want to annoy. I should think she'd do everything on earth to please you and placate you. She'd want to keep you from telling. That's the weak point in your theory, Lydia."

"It isn't a theory. I'm speaking of facts."

"But if she knows you're aware of what might

ruin her," he insisted, "she would naturally be afraid of you. Then why would she do a thing that might infuriate you?"

"Because she's a woman," said Mrs. Dodge. "And that's something you'll never understand!"

"But even a woman would behave with some remnants of caution, under the circumstances, wouldn't she?"

"Some women might. Mrs. Braithwaite doesn't because she's so sure of her lofty position she thinks she can deliberately insult me and I won't dare to do anything about it. She wanted to show me that she isn't afraid of me."

Mr. Dodge looked thoughtfully at that point upon his long cigar where a slender ring of red glow intervened between the adhering gray ash and the brown tobacco. "Well, at least she shows a fiery heart," he said. "In a way, you'd have to consider her action quite the sporting thing. You mean she's sent you a kind of declaration of war, don't you?"

"If you want to look at it that way. I don't myself. I take it just as she meant it, and that's as a deliberate insult."

"But it isn't an 'insult' if she only meant it to show she isn't afraid of you, Lydia."

"It is, though," Mrs. Dodge insisted. "What she means is derision of me. It's the same as if she said: 'Here's a slap in the face for you. I have the satisfaction of humiliating you as your punishment for knowing what you do know about me, and you can't retaliate, because you aren't important enough to be able to injure me!' It's just the same as if she'd said those words to me."

"It seems quite a message," he observed. "Of course, I can't grasp it myself because I haven't any conception of this ruinous proceeding of hers. You were the only witness, I assume?"

"There was a third person present," Mrs. Dodge said, stiffly. "But not as a witness."

"Then what was the third person present doing?"

Mrs. Dodge looked at him with severity, as if she reproved him for tempting her to do something wrong; then she took from a basket in her lap a square piece of partly embroidered linen and gave it her attention, not relaxing this preoccupation where her husband began to repeat his question.

"What was the third person——"

"I heard you," Mrs. Dodge interrupted, frowning at her embroidery. "If I told you that much I'd be virtually telling the whole thing; and I've decided

not to do that, even under her deliberate provocation. If I let myself be provoked into telling, I'd be as small as she is, so you needn't hope to get another word out of me on the subject. The only answer I'll make to your question is that the third person present was not her husband."

"Oh!" Mr. Dodge said, loudly, and, in his sudden enlightenment, whistled "Whee-ew!" again. "So *that's* it!"

"Not at all," she said. "You needn't jump to conclusions, and you'll never know anything more about it from me. The only way you could ever know about it would be through her husband's making a fuss and its getting into the papers or something."

"I see," Mr. Dodge said, apparently not much discouraged. "And, since it's something he hasn't *yet* made any fuss about, it's evidently because he doesn't know."

"*He!*" Mrs. Dodge cried, and, in her scorn of Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's consort, dropped the embroidery into the basket and stared fiercely at Mr. Dodge; though it was really at an invisible Mr. Braithwaite that she directed this glare of hers. Apparently the unfortunate gentleman was one of those mere

husbands whose existence seems either to amuse or to incense the wives of more dominant men: Mrs. Dodge certainly appeared to be incensed. "That miserable little pale shadow of a man!" she cried. "His name's Leslie Braithwaite, but do you ever hear him spoken of except as 'Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's husband'? He goes down to his little brass-rod works at eight o'clock every morning and gets money for her until six in the evening. Then he comes home and works on the account books of her uplifts until bedtime. If they go out, he stands around with her wrap over his arm and doesn't speak unless you ask him a question. If you do, he begins his answer by saying, 'My wife informs me'—How could that poor little creature know anything about anything?"

"But *you* know," Mr. Dodge persisted. "You *do* know, do you, Lydia?"

"I know what I know," she replied, and resumed her preoccupation with the embroidery.

"But you couldn't substantiate it by another witness, I take it," he said, musingly. "That is, she feels safe against you because if you should ever decide to tell what you know, she would deny it and put you in the position of an accuser without proofs.

It would simply be your word against hers, and she'd have the sympathy that goes to the party attacked and also the advantage of her wide reputation for lofty character and——”

“Go on,” his wife interrupted. “Amuse yourself all you like; you'll not find out another thing from me. Perhaps, if you should ever spend the morning at home digging around in our flower border along the hedge between her yard and ours, you might happen to hear her talking to her chauffeur, and in that case you might get to know something more. Otherwise, I don't see how you ever will.”

“Lydia!”

“What?”

“I'm not going to dig in any flower border! I'm not going to spy around any hedge just to——”

“Neither did I!” she cried, indignantly. “Did you ever know me to do any spying?”

“Certainly not. But you said——”

“I said ‘If you *happen* to.’ You don't suppose I hid and listened deliberately? I was down on my hands and knees planting tulip bulbs, and the thick hedge was between us. That's how it happened, and why, she never *dreamed* anybody was near her. I didn't even hear her come in that part of the yard

until I heard her speaking right by me, on the other side of the hedge. Please don't be quite so quick to think your wife would be willing to spy on another woman."

"I didn't," Mr. Dodge protested, hastily. "What did she say to the chauffeur?"

"That," his wife replied, severely, "is something you'll never hear from me!"

"From whom shall I hear it, then?"

"I've just told you how you might hear it," she said, plying her needle and seeming to give it all her attention.

"But I can't spend my time in the tulip bed, Lydia."

"That's not what I meant. I said, 'If her husband ever makes such a fuss that it gets into the papers.'"

"If he does, I might find out what she said to the chauffeur?"

"Oh, maybe," Mrs. Dodge said; and she gave him a sidelong glance of some sharpness, then quickly seemed to be busy again with her work.

"I don't make it out at all," the puzzled gentleman complained. "Apparently you overheard Mrs. Braithwaite saying something to her chauffeur that would be ruinous to her if it were known—something



that might cause her husband to make a public uproar if he had heard it himself. Is that it?"

Mrs. Dodge began to hum fragmentarily to herself and seemed concerned with nothing in the world except the selection of a proper spool of thread from her basket.

"Is that it, Lydia?"

"You'll never find out from me," she said, searching anxiously through the basket. "Anyhow, I shouldn't think you'd need to ask such simple questions."

"So that *is* it! What you heard her say to her chauffeur would ruin her if people knew about it. Was she talking to the chauffeur about her husband?"

"Good gracious!" Mrs. Dodge cried, derisively. "What would she be talking to anybody about *that* poor little thing for? She never does. I don't believe anybody ever heard her mention him in her life!"

"Then was she talking to the chauffeur about some other man?"

"Of all the ideas! If a woman were in love with a man not her husband, do you think she'd tell her servants about it? Besides, they've only had this chauffeur about two weeks. Have you noticed him?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dodge. "I've seen him sitting in their car in front of the house several times, and I was quite struck with him. He seemed to be not only one of the handsomest young men I ever saw, but to have rather the look of a gentleman."

"So?" Mrs. Dodge said, inquiringly; and her tone was the more significant because of her appearing to be wholly preoccupied with her work-basket. "You noticed *that*, did you?"

"You don't mean to say——"

"I don't mean to say anything at all," she interrupted, crisply. "I've told you that often enough for you to begin to understand it."

"All right, I do. Well, when she'd said whatever she did say to the chauffeur, what happened?"

"Oh, that," she returned, "I'm perfectly willing to tell you. I got up and looked at her over the hedge. I wasn't going to stay there and listen—and I certainly wasn't going to crawl away on my hands and knees! I just looked at her quietly and turned away and came into the house."

"What did she do?"

"She was absolutely disconcerted. Her face just seemed to go all to pieces;—it didn't look like *her* face at all. She was frightened to death, and I

never saw anything plainer. That's one reason she hates me so—because I saw her looking so afraid of me and she couldn't help it. Of course, as soon as I got into the house I looked out through the lace curtains at a window—you could hardly expect me not to—and I saw her just going back into her own house by the side door. She'd braced up and looked all stained-glass Joan of Arc again by that time."

Mr. Dodge sat wagging his head and muttering in wonder. "Of all the curious things!" he said. "Human nature is so everlastingly full of oddities it's always turning up new ones that you sit and stare at and can't believe are real. There they are, right before your eyes, and yet they're incredible. What did she say to the chauffeur?"

"No, no," Mrs. Dodge said, reprovingly. "That's what I *can't* tell you." And she added, "I should think you could guess it, anyhow."

"Was there——" He paused a moment, pondering. "Did she use any specially marked terms of endearment in addressing him?"

"No," Mrs. Dodge replied, returning her attention to her work;—"not terms."

"Oh," he said. "Just one term, then. She used

a single term of endearment in addressing him. Is that correct?"

Again Mrs. Dodge became musical: she hummed a cheerful tune, but her face was overcast with a dour solemnity.

"So she did!" her husband exclaimed. "Did she call him 'dear'?"

"No, she didn't."

"'Dearest'?"

"No, she didn't."

"Not," he said, incredulously, "not—'*darling*'?"

Mrs. Dodge instantly resumed her humming.

"By George!" her husband cried. "Why, that's just awful! What else did she say to him besides calling him 'darling'?"

"I didn't say she said anything else," Mrs. Dodge returned, primly. "The rest wasn't so important, anyhow, and she was speaking in a low voice. I thought the rest of it was, 'Rosemary, that's for remembrance.' I couldn't be sure because I didn't hear it distinctly."

"But you *did* distinctly hear her call him 'darling'?"

"What I heard distinctly," Mrs. Dodge replied, "I heard distinctly."

"So what Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite said to the chauffeur was this: 'Rosemary, that's for remembrance, darling'?"

"You must draw your own conclusions," she advised him, severely.

"I do—rather!" he returned, and in a marvelling tone slowly pronounced their neighbour's name, "Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite! Of all the women in the world, Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite! And when you rose up, and she saw you, she just went all to pieces and didn't say a word?"

"I told you."

"What did the handsome chauffeur do?"

"Just stood there."

"It's beyond anything!" Mr. Dodge's amazement was not abated;—he shook his head and uttered groaning sounds of pessimistic wonderment. "I suppose the true meaning of the saying, 'It's the unexpected that happens,' is that life is always teaching us to accept the incredible. How long ago was it?"

"A week ago yesterday."

"Have you seen her since?"

"I never talk to her or she to me. We say, 'How do you do? What lovely weather!' and that's all

## 30 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

BAD MAN  
Euston.

JOHN  
St. Pancras.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*angrily*)  
Oh, shut up! The ticket for the ticket, which  
is in a hatbox at Paddington, for the Ruby  
which is in a hatbox at—at——

JOHN  
St. Panc——

HERO  
Waterloo.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Waterloo, thank you. — This ticket is in a hatbox  
at—er——

JOHN  
St. Pancras.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Shut up! In a hatbox at——

HERO  
Charing Cross.

CHIEF VILLAIN  
Exactly. (*Triumphantly:*) Then give me the  
ticket.

"Never mind! We can talk of her just as well without any references to gauntlets and mocking laughter and varlets. That is, if you insist upon talking about her at all. For my part, I prefer just to keep her entirely out of my mind."

"Very well," he assented, meekly. "I don't know that I can keep anything so singular out of my mind; but I won't speak of it if it annoys you. What else shall we talk of?"

"Anything in the world except that detestable woman," Mrs. Dodge replied. Then, after some moments of silence over her embroidery, she added abruptly, "Of course, *you* don't think she's detestable!"

"I only said——"

"'Picturesque' was what you said. 'Dashing' was another thing you said. You're quite fascinated with her derisive gauntlets and her mocking laughter! Dear *me*, if that isn't like men!"

"But I only——"

"Oh, murder!" Mrs. Dodge moaned, interrupting him. "I thought you said you weren't going to *talk* about her any more!"

At this he showed spirit enough to laugh. "You know well enough we're both going to keep on

## 32 THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT

CHIEF VILLAIN (*after several vain attempts to speak*)  
Where is it?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Victoria Station.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*moistening his lips and speaking very faintly*)

Not—not in a hatbox?

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*without much hope*)

And the ticket for that?

HERO

In the cloakroom at Euston.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*quite broken up*)

Also in a hatbox?

HERO

Yes.

CHIEF VILLAIN

How much longer do we go on?

HERO (*cheerfully*)

Oh, a long time yet.

CHIEF VILLAIN (*to Bad Man*)

How many London stations are there?

JOHN

Well, there's St. Pancras, and——

MARY

Liverpool Street.



"You mean she tried to ingratiate herself?" he asked. "Her manner was more winsome or flattering than usual?"

"No, not exactly. Not so open—you couldn't understand—but it was perfectly clear to me she was having the time of her life thinking of what she'd done to me through my husband's weakness, when all at once she thought of my influence with the Cromwells. Well, she's afraid of it, and it made her wish she hadn't gone quite so far with me. She'd give a whole lot to-night, I'll wager, if she'd been just a little less picturesque with her gauntlet throwing and her mocking laughter! You asked me what I was going to do and I told you 'Nothing.' But *she'll* do something. She's afraid, and she'll make a move of some sort. You'll see."

"But what? What could she do?"

"I don't know, but you'll see. You'll see before long, too."

"Well, I'm inclined to hope so," he said. "It would certainly be interesting; but I doubt her making any move at all. I'm afraid you won't turn out to be a good prophet."

On the contrary, he himself was a poor prophet; for sometimes destiny seems to juggle miraculously

with coincidences in order to attract our attention to the undiscovered laws that produce them. In fact, Mr. Dodge was so poor a prophet—and so near to intentional burlesque are the manners of destiny in its coincidence juggling—that at this moment Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's husband had just rung the Dodges' front-door bell. Two minutes later a mulatto housemaid appeared in the doorway of the library and produced a sensational effect merely by saying, "Mrs. Braithwaite and Mr. Braithwaite is calling. I showed 'em into the drawing-room."

She withdrew, and the staggered couple, after an interval of incoherent whispering, went forth to welcome their guests.

### III

#### MRS. LESLIE BRAITHWAITE'S HUSBAND

MRS. BRAITHWAITE was superb;—at least, that was Mr. Dodge's impersonal conception of her. Never before had he seen sainthood so suavely combined with a piquant beauty, nor an evening gown of dull red silk and black lace so exquisitely invested with an angelic presence. For to-night this lady looked not only noble, she looked charming; and either his wife had made a grotesque mistake or he stood before an actress unmatched in his experience. She began talking at once, in her serene and sweet contralto voice—a beautiful voice, delicately hushed and almost imperceptibly precise in its pronunciation. “It seemed to us really rather absurd, Mrs. Dodge, that you and your husband should be our next-door neighbours for so long without even having set foot in our house or we in yours. And as Mr. Dodge has lately been so generous to my poor little Workers’ Welfare League—the unhappy creatures do need

help so, and the ladies of the committee were so touched by your kindness, Mr. Dodge—we thought we'd just make that an excuse to call, even thus informally and for only a few minutes. We wanted to express the thanks of the League, of course, and we thought it was about time to say we aren't really so unneighbourly as we may have seemed—and we hope you aren't, either!”

“No, indeed,” Mr. Dodge responded with a hasty glance of sidelong uneasiness at his wife. Her large face was red and rather dismayingly fierce as she sat stiffly in the stiffest chair in the Dodges' white-walled, cold, and rigidly symmetrical drawing-room; but she said, “No, indeed,” too, though not so heartily as her husband did. In fact, she said it grimly; yet he was relieved, for her expression made him fear that she would say nothing at all.

“One of the things I find to regret about modern existence,” Mrs. Braithwaite continued, in her beautiful voice, “is the disappearance of neighbourliness even in a quiet suburban life like yours and ours. Of course, this is anything but a new thought, yet how concretely our two houses have illustrated it! So it did seem time, at last, to break the ice, especially as I have good reason to think that just

these last few days you must have been thinking of me as quite a naughty person, Mrs. Dodge."

Mrs. Dodge stared at her; appeared to stare not only with astounded eyes but with a slowly opening mouth. "What? What did you say?" she asked, huskily.

"I'm afraid you've been thinking of me as rather naughty," the serene caller said, and her ever promised smile seemed a little more emphatically promised than it had been. "I ought to confess to you that as a collector for my poor little Workers' League I'm terribly unscrupulous. It's such a struggling little organization, and the need of help is so frightfully pressing, I may as well admit I haven't any scruples at all how I get money for it. Yet, of course, I know I ought to apologize for asking Mr. Dodge to contribute to a cause that you didn't feel particularly interested in yourself."

"Oh!" Mrs. Dodge said, and to her husband's consternation she added formidably: "Is *that* what you're talking about!"

No disastrous effect was visible, however. Mrs. Braithwaite nodded sunnily. "I'm sure you'll forgive me for the sake of the happiness the money brought to a pitiful little family—the father hasn't

had any work for eight months; there are four young children and one just born. If you could see their joy when——”

“I dare say!” Mrs. Dodge interrupted. “I’m glad it did *some* good!”

“I was sure you’d feel so.” Mrs. Braithwaite glanced gently at her host, whose face was a remarkable study of geniality in conflict with apprehension;—then her gaze returned to her hostess. “I wanted to make my peace not only for myself,” she added, “but for your husband. I’m sure you’re going to forgive him, Mrs. Dodge.”

Innocently, Mr. Dodge supposed this to be intended as a kindly effort on his behalf and in the general interests of amiability. He was surprised, therefore, and his apprehensions of an outbreak on the part of his wife were little abated, when he perceived that its effect upon her was far from placative. Her ample figure seemed to swell; she was red but grew redder; her action in breathing became not only visible but noticeable; to his appalled vision she seemed about to snort forth sparks. For several perilous moments she did not speak;—then, after compressing her lips tightly, she said: “Mr. Dodge sent you his check upon my direction, of course. Natur-

ally, he consulted me. I told him that since you had twice solicited me for a subscription it would be best for us to send you some money and be done with it."

Mrs. Braithwaite uttered a soothing sound as of amused relief. "That's so much nicer," she said. "I was afraid you might have been annoyed with both of us—with both poor Mr. Dodge and myself—but that exculpates us. I'm so very glad." She turned to the perturbed host. "I was *so* afraid I'd involved you, Mr. Dodge—perhaps quite beyond forgiveness."

"Not at all—not at all," he said, removing his gaze with difficulty from his wife's face. "Oh, no. Everything—everything's been perfectly pleasant," he floundered, and Mrs. Dodge's expression did not reassure him that he was saying the right thing. "Perfectly—pleasant," he repeated, feebly.

"I *so* hoped it would be," Mrs. Braithwaite said. "I hoped Mrs. Dodge wouldn't be *very* hard on you for aiding in such a good cause."

"No," he returned, nervously. "No, she—she wasn't. She proved to be entirely—ah—amiable, of course." And again he was dismayed by Mrs. Dodge's expression.

"Of course," Mrs. Braithwaite agreed, sunnily, with only the quickest and sweetest little fling of a glance at her hostess, "I was *sure* she'd forgive you. Well, at any rate, we've both made our peace with her now and established the *entente cordiale*, I hope." She turned toward her husband and spoke his name gently, in the tone that is none the less a command to the obedient follower: "Leslie." It was apparently her permission for him to prepare himself for departure; but it may also have been a signal or command for him to do something else;—Mr. Dodge noticed that it brought an oddly plaintive look into the eyes of the small and dark Braithwaite.

Throughout the brief but strained interview he had been sitting in one of the Dodges' rigid chairs as quietly as if he had been a well-behaved little son of Mrs. Braithwaite's, brought along to make a call upon grown people. He was slender as well as short; of a delicate, almost fragile, appearance; and in company habitually so silent, so self-oblitative that it might well have been a matter of doubt whether he was profoundly secretive or of an overwhelming timidity. But as he sat in the Dodges' slim black chair, himself rather like that chair, with his trim,



thin little black legs primly uncrossed and his small black back straight and stiff, there were suggestions that he was more secretive than timid. Under his eyes were semicircles of darkness, as if part of what he secreted might have been a recent anguish, either physical or mental. Moreover, if he had been in reality the well-trained little boy his manners during this short evening call had suggested, those semicircles under his eyes would have told of anguish so acute that the little boy had wept.

When his wife said "Leslie," he swallowed; there came into his eyes the odd and plaintive look his host had noticed—it was the look now not of a good little boy but of a good little dog, obedient in a painful task set by the adored master—and he stood up immediately.

"We really must be running," his wife said, rising, too. "This was just our funny little effort to break the ice. I do hope it has, and that you'll both come in to see us some evening. I *do* hope you'll *both* come." She put an almost imperceptible stress on the word "both" as she moved toward the door; then said "Leslie" again. He was still standing beside his chair.

"Ah—" he said; then paused and coughed. "I—I wonder——"

"Yes?" his host said, encouragingly.

"I—that is, I was going to say, by the way, I wonder if you happen to know of a good chauffeur, Mr. Dodge."

At this, Mrs. Dodge's breathing became audible as well as visible, there fell a moment of such silence.

"A—a chauffeur? No," Mr. Dodge said. "No, I don't think I do. We haven't one ourselves; we do our own driving. A chauffeur? No. I'm afraid I don't know of any."

"I see," Braithwaite returned. "I just happened to ask. We've—ah—lost the man we've had lately. He was a very good driver and we haven't anybody to take his place."

Mrs. Dodge spoke sepulchrally as she rose from her chair. "That's too bad," she said, and, to her husband's relief, stopped there, adding nothing.

"Yes," Braithwaite assented. "He was a very good driver indeed; but he was a college graduate and only yesterday he found another position, tutoring, and left us. He was a very good man—Dolling."

"What?" Mr. Dodge said. "Who?"

"Dolling," Braithwaite replied; and followed his wife to the door. "I just happened to mention his name: Dolling. I—I didn't address you as 'darling,' Mr. Dodge, though I see how you might easily have thought I did. The man's name was Dolling. I shouldn't like you to think I'd take the liberty of calling *you*——"

But here he was interrupted by such an uproarious shout of laughter from his host that his final words were lost. Mr. Dodge's laughter continued, though it was interspersed with hearty expressions of hospitality and parting cheer, until the callers had passed the outer threshold and the door had closed behind them. Then the hilarious gentleman returned from the hall to face a wife who found nothing in the world, just then, a laughing matter.

"The worst thing you did," she assured him, "was to be so fascinated that you told her I'd been amiable to you about your sending that check—just after I said I knew all about it *before* you sent it and had *told* you to send it! That was a pleasant position to put your wife in, wasn't it?"

"Lydia!" he shouted, still outrageous in his mirth. "Let's forget that part of it and remember only Dolling!"

"All right," she said, and her angry eyes flashed. "Suppose his name *was* Dolling. What was she talking to him about rosemary and remembrance for?"

"I don't know, and it doesn't seem important. The only thing I can get my mind on is your keeping to yourself so solemnly the scandalous romance of Dolling!" And becoming more respectably sober, for a time, he asked her: "Don't you really see a little fun in it, Lydia?"

"What!" she cried. "Do you? After you saw that wretched little man of hers stand up there and recite his lesson like a trained monkey? Did you look at *her* while he was performing? She stood in the doorway and held the whip-lash over him till he finished! And if this idol of yours is so innocent and pure, why did she go all to pieces the way she did when she saw me that morning by the hedge?"

"Why, don't you see?" he cried. "Of course she saw you thought she'd called the man 'darling'! She knew you didn't know his name was Dolling. Isn't it plain to you *yet*?"

"No!" his wife said, vehemently. "It isn't plain to me and it never will be!"

## IV

### “DOLLING”

**A** GAINST all reason she persisted in a sinister interpretation of her lovely neighbour's conduct;—never would Mrs. Dodge admit that Mr. Dodge had the right of the matter, and after a time she complained that she found his continued interest in it “pretty tiresome.”

“You keep bringing it up,” she said, “because you think you’ve had a wretched little triumph over me. It’s one of those things that never can be settled either way, and I don’t care to talk of it any more. If you want to occupy your spare thoughts I have a topic to offer you.”

“What topic?”

Mrs. Dodge shook her head in a certain way.  
“Lily.”

“Oh, dear me!” he said. “It isn’t happening again?”

She informed him that it was, indeed. Lily’s extreme affections were once more engaged. “We’re

in for it!” was the mother’s preface, as she began the revelation; and, when she concluded, her husband sorrowfully agreed with her.

“It’s awful now and will be worse,” he said; and thus his “spare thoughts” became but too thoroughly occupied. In his growing anxiety over his daughter, he ceased to think of his neighbours;—the handsome chauffeur passed from his mind. Then abruptly, one day, as the wandering searchlight of a harboured ship may startlingly clarify some obscure thing upon the shore, a chance conjuncture illuminated for him most strangely the episode of Dolling.

He was lunching with a younger member of his firm in a canyon restaurant downtown, and his attention happened to become concentrated upon a debonair young man who had finished his lunch and was now engaged in affable discussion with the pretty cashier. He was one of those young men, sometimes encountered, who have not only a strong masculine beauty, but the look of talent, with both the beauty and the talent belittled by an irresponsible twinkle of the eye. Standing below the level of the cashier’s desk, which was upon a platform, there was something about him that suggested a laughing Romeo; and, in response, the cashier was evidently not unwilling

to play a flippant Juliet. She tossed her head at him, tapped his cheek with a pencil, chattering eagerly; she blushed, laughed, and at last looked yearningly after him as he went away. Mr. Dodge also looked; for the young man was Dolling, once Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's chauffeur.

"Fine little bit of comedy, that," the junior member of Mr. Dodge's firm remarked, across their small table. "Talked her into giving him credit for his lunch. She'll have to make it up out of her own pocket until he pays her. Of course, he's done it before, and she knows him. Characteristic of that fellow;—he's a great hand to put it over with the girls!"

"Do you know him, Williams?" Mr. Dodge asked, a little interested.

"Know him? Lord, yes! He was in my class at college till he got fired in sophomore year. Every now and then he comes to me and I have to stake him. He's a reporter just now; but it's always the same—whether he's working or not, he never has any money. He can do anything: act, sing, break horses, drive an airplane, any kind of newspaper work—publishes poetry in the papers sometimes, and

he's not such a bad poet, either, at that. But he's just one of these natural-born drifters—too good looking and too restless. He never holds a job more than a couple of months.”

“I suppose not,” Mr. Dodge said, absently. “I suppose he's tried a good many.”

“Rather!” Williams exclaimed. “I've got him I don't know how many, myself. The last time I did he was pretty well down and out, and the best I could get for him was a chauffeur's job for a little cuss I happened to know in the brass trade—Braithwaite. Lives out your way somewhere, I think. O'Boyle *took* it all right; it was chauff or starve!”

“I beg your pardon. Who took what?”

“O'Boyle,” said Williams. “Charlie O'Boyle, the man we're talking about—the chap that was just conning the cashier yonder. I was telling you he took a job as chauffeur for a family out your way in the suburbs.”

“Yes, I understood,” Mr. Dodge returned, with more gravity than Williams expected as a tribute to this casual narrative. “You said this O'Boyle became a chauffeur to some people named Braithwaite and that you obtained the position for him. I



merely wondered—I suppose when you recommended this O’Boyle to Mr. Braithwaite you—ah—you mentioned his name? I mean to say: you introduced O’Boyle as O’Boyle.”

“Well, naturally,” Williams replied, surprised and a little nettled. “Why wouldn’t I? I wouldn’t expect people to take on a man for a family job like that and not tell ’em his *name*, would I? I don’t see what you——”

“Nothing,” Mr. Dodge said, hurriedly. “Nothing at all. It was a ridiculous question. My mind was wandering to other things, or I shouldn’t have asked it. We’d better get down to business, I suppose.”

But that was something his wandering mind refused to do; nor would it under any consideration or pressure “get down to business” during the rest of that afternoon. He went home early, and, walking from his suburban **station** in the first twilight of a gray but rainless November day, arrived at his own gate just as the Braithwaites’ closed car drew up at the curb before the next house.

An elderly negro chauffeur climbed down rustily from his seat at the wheel and opened the shining door; Mrs. Braithwaite stepped gracefully down,

and, with her lovely saint's face uplifted above dark furs, she crossed the pavement, entered the low iron gateway, and walked up the wide stone path that led through the lawn to the house. On the opposite side of the street a group of impressed women stopped to stare, grateful for the favouring chance that gave them this glimpse of the great lady.

Mr. Braithwaite descended from the car and followed his wife toward the house. He did not overtake her and walk beside her; but his insignificant legs beneath his overcoat kept his small feet moving in neat short steps a little way behind her.

Meanwhile, the pausing neighbour gazed at them and his open mouth showed how he pondered. It was not upon this strange woman, a little of whose strangeness had so lately been revealed to him, that he pondered most, nor about her that he most profoundly wondered. For, strange as the woman seemed to him, far stranger seemed the little creature pattering so faithfully behind her up the walk.

In so helpless a fidelity Mr. Dodge felt something touching; and perhaps, too, he felt that men must keep men's secrets. At all events, he made a high resolve. It would be hard on Mrs. Dodge, even unfair to her; but then and there he made up his

mind that for the sake of Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's husband he would never tell anybody—and of all the world he would never tell Mrs. Dodge—what he had learned that day about Mrs. Leslie Braithwaite's husband's loyalty.



THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN

BY EDNA FERBER

*from "Gigolo"*



## THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN

**T**HOUGH he rarely heeded its summons—cagy boy that he was—the telephone rang oftenest for Nick. Because of the many native noises of the place, the telephone had a special bell that was a combination buzz and ring. It sounded above the roar of outgoing cars, the splash of the hose, the sputter and hum of the electric battery in the rear. Nick heard it, unheeding. A voice—Smitty's or Mike's or Elmer's—answering its call. Then, echoing through the grey, vaulted spaces of the big garage: "Nick! Oh, Ni-ick!"

From the other side of the great cement-floored enclosure, or in muffled tones from beneath a car: "Whatcha want?"

"Dame on the wire."

"I ain't in."

The obliging voice again, dutifully repeating the message: "He ain't in. . . . Well, it's hard to say. He might be in in a couple hours and then

again he might not be back till late. I guess he's went to Hammond on a job——" (Warming to his task now.) "Say, won't I do? . . . Who's fresh! Aw, say, *lady!*"

You'd think, after repeated rebuffs of this sort, she could not possibly be so lacking in decent pride as to leave her name for Smitty or Mike or Elmer to bandy about. But she invariably did, baffled by Nick's elusiveness. She was likely to be any one of a number. Miss Bauers phoned: Will you tell him, please? (A nasal voice, and haughty, with the hauteur that seeks to conceal secret fright.) Tell him it's important. Miss Ahearn phoned: Will you tell him, please? Just say Miss Ahearn. A-h-e-a-r-n. Miss Olson: Just Gertie. But oftenest Miss Bauers.

Cupid's messenger, wearing grease-grimed overalls and the fatuous grin of the dalliant male, would transmit his communication to the uneager Nick.

"'S wonder you wouldn't answer the phone onct yourself. Says you was to call Miss Bauers any time you come in between one and six at Hyde Park—wait a min't'—yeh—Hyde Park 6079, and any time after six at——"

"Wha'd she want?"

"Well, how the hell should *I* know! Says call Miss Bauers any time between one and six at Hyde Park 6——"



"Swell chanst. *Swell* chanst!"

Which explains why the calls came oftenest for Nick. He was so indifferent to them. You pictured the patient and persistent Miss Bauers, or the oxlike Miss Olson, or Miss Ahearn, or just Gertie hovering within hearing distance of the telephone listening, listening—while one o'clock deepened to six—for the call that never came; plucking up fresh courage at six until six o'clock dragged on to bedtime. When next they met: "I bet you was there all the time. Pity you wouldn't answer a call when a person leaves their name. You could of give me a ring. I bet you was there all the time."

"Well, maybe I was."

Bewildered, she tried to retaliate with the boomerang of vituperation.

How could she know? How could she know that this slim, slick young garage mechanic was a woodland creature in disguise—a satyr in store clothes—a wild thing who perversely preferred to do his own pursuing? How could Miss Bauers know—she who cashiered in the Green Front Grocery and Market on Fifty-third Street? Or Miss Olson, at the Rialto ticket window? Or the Celtic, emotional Miss Ahearn, the manicure? Or Gertie the goof? They knew nothing of mythology; of pointed ears and pug noses and goat's feet. Nick's ears, to their fond gaze, presented an honest red surface pro-

truding from either side of his head. His feet, in tan laced shoes, were ordinary feet, a little more than ordinarily expert, perhaps, in the convolutions of the dance at Englewood Masonic Hall, which is part of Chicago's vast South Side. No; a faun, to Miss Bauers, Miss Olson, Miss Ahearn, and just Gertie, was one of those things in the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Perhaps, sometimes, they realized, vaguely, that Nick was different. When, for example, they tried—and failed—to picture him looking interestedly at one of those three-piece bedroom sets glistening like pulled taffy in the window of the installment furniture store, while they, shy yet proprietary, clung to his arm and eyed the price ticket. Now \$98.50. You couldn't see Nick interested in bedroom sets, in price tickets, in any of those settled, fixed, everyday things. He was fluid, evasive, like quicksilver, though they did not put it thus.

Miss Bauers, goaded to revolt, would say pettishly: "You're like a mosquito, that's what. Person never knows from one minute to the other where you're at."

"Yeh," Nick would retort. "When you know where a mosquito's at, what do you do to him? Plenty. I ain't looking to be squashed."

Miss Ahearn, whose public position (the Hygienic Barber Shop. Gent's manicure, 50c.) offered un-

limited social opportunities, would assume a gay indifference. "They's plenty boys begging to take me out every hour in the day. Swell lads, too. I ain't waiting round for any greasy mechanic like you. Don't think it. Say, lookit your nails! They'd queer you with me, let alone what else all is wrong with you."

In answer Nick would put one hand—one broad, brown, steel-strong hand with its broken discoloured nails—on Miss Ahearn's arm, in its flimsy georgette sleeve. Miss Ahearn's eyelids would flutter and close, and a little shiver would run with icy-hot feet all over Miss Ahearn.

Nick was like that.

Nick's real name wasn't Nick at all—or scarcely at all. His last name was Nicholas, and his parents, long before they became his parents, traced their origin to some obscure Czechoslovakian province—long before we became so glib with our Czechoslovakia. His first name was Dewey, knowing which you automatically know the date of his birth. It was a patriotic but unfortunate choice on the part of his parents. The name did not fit him; was too mealy; not debonair enough. Nick. Nicky in tenderer moments (Miss Bauers, Miss Olson, Miss Ahearn, just Gertie, et al.).

His method with women was firm and somewhat stern, but never brutal. He never waited for them

if they were late. Any girl who assumed that her value was enhanced in direct proportion to her tardiness in keeping an engagement with Nick found herself standing disconsolate on the corner of Fifty-third and Lake trying to look as if she were merely waiting for the Lake Park car and not peering wistfully up and down the street in search of a slim, graceful, hurrying figure that never came.

It is difficult to convey in words the charm that Nick possessed. Seeing him, you beheld merely a medium-sized young mechanic in reasonably grimed garage clothes when working; and in tight pants, tight coat, silk shirt, long-visored green cap when at leisure. A rather pallid skin due to the nature of his work. Large deft hands, a good deal like the hands of a surgeon, square, blunt-fingered, spatulate. Indeed, as you saw him at work, a wire-netted electric bulb held in one hand, the other plunged deep into the vitals of the car on which he was engaged, you thought of a surgeon performing a major operation. He wore one of those round skullcaps characteristic of his craft (the brimless crown of an old felt hat). He would deftly remove the transmission case and plunge his hand deep into the car's guts, feeling expertly about with his engine-wise fingers as a surgeon feels for liver, stomach, gall bladder, intestines, appendix. When he brought up his hand, all dripping with grease (which is the warm

blood of the car), he invariably had put his finger on the sore spot.

All this, of course, could not serve to endear him to the girls. On the contrary, you would have thought that his hands alone, from which he could never quite free the grease and grit, would have caused some feeling of repugnance among the lily-fingered. But they, somehow, seemed always to be finding an excuse to touch him: his tie, his hair, his coat sleeve. They seemed even to derive a vicarious thrill from holding his hat or cap when on an outing. They brushed imaginary bits of lint from his coat lapel. They tried on his seal ring, crying: "Oo, lookit, how big it is for me, even my thumb!" He called this "pawing a guy over"; and the lint ladies he designated as "thread pickers."

No; it can't be classified, this powerful draw he had for them. His conversation furnished no clue. It was commonplace conversation, limited, even dull. When astonished, or impressed, or horrified, or amused, he said: "Ken yuh feature that!" When emphatic or confirmatory, he said: "You *tell* 'em!"

It wasn't his car and the opportunities it furnished for drives, both country and city. That motley piece of mechanism represented such an assemblage of unrelated parts as could only have been made to coördinate under Nick's expert guidance. It was out of commission more than half the time, and

could never be relied upon to furnish a holiday. Both Miss Bauers and Miss Ahearn had twelve-cylinder opportunities that should have rendered them forever unfit for travel in Nick's one-lung vehicle of locomotion.

It wasn't money. Though he was generous enough with what he had, Nick couldn't be generous with what he hadn't. And his wage at the garage was \$40 a week. Miss Ahearn's silk stockings cost \$4.50.

His unconcern should have infuriated them, but it served to pique. He wasn't actually as unconcerned as he appeared, but he had early learned that effort in their direction was unnecessary. Nick had little imagination; a gorgeous selfishness; a tolerantly contemptuous liking for the sex. Naturally, however, his attitude toward them had been somewhat embittered by being obliged to watch their method of driving a car in and out of the Ideal Garage doorway. His own manipulation of the wheel was nothing short of wizardry.

He played the harmonica.

Each Thursday afternoon was Nick's half day off. From twelve until seven-thirty he was free to range the bosky highways of Chicago. When his car—he called it "the bus"—was agreeable, he went awheel in search of amusement. The bus being indisposed, he went afoot. He rarely made plans in advance; usually was accompanied by some success-

ful telephone. He rather liked to have a silken skirt beside him fluttering and flirting in the breeze as he broke the speed regulations.

On this Thursday afternoon in July he had timed his morning job to a miraculous nicety so that at the stroke of twelve his workaday garments dropped from him magically, as though he were a male (and reversed) Cinderella. There was a wash room and a rough sort of sleeping room containing two cots situated in the second story of the Ideal Garage. Here Nick shed the loose garments of labour for the fashionably tight habiliments of leisure. Private chauffeurs whose employers housed their cars in the Ideal Garage used this nook for a lounge and smoker. Smitty, Mike, Elmer, and Nick snatched stolen siestas there in the rare absences of the manager. Sometimes Nick spent the night there when forced to work overtime. His home life, at best, was a sketchy affair. Here chauffeurs, mechanics, washers lolled at ease exchanging soft-spoken gossip, motor chat, speculation, comment, and occasional verbal obscenity. Each possessed a formidable knowledge of that neighbourhood section of Chicago known as Hyde Park. This knowledge was not confined to car costs and such impersonal items, but included meals, scandals, relationships, finances, love affairs, quarrels, peccadillos. Here Nick often played his harmonica, his lips sweeping the metal

length of it in throbbing rendition of such sure-fire sentimentality as *The Long, Long Trail*, or *Mammy*, while the others talked, joked, kept time with tapping feet or wagging heads.

To-day the hot little room was empty except for Nick, shaving before the cracked mirror on the wall, and old Elmer, reading a scrap of yesterday's newspaper as he lounged his noon hour away. Old Elmer was thirty-seven, and Nicky regarded him as an octogenarian. Also, old Elmer's conversation bored Nick to the point of almost sullen resentment. Old Elmer was a family man. His talk was all of his family—the wife, the kids, the flat. A garrulous person, lank, pasty, dish-faced, and amiable. His half day off was invariably spent tinkering about the stuffy little flat—painting, nailing up shelves, mending a broken window shade, puttying a window, playing with his pasty little boy, aged sixteen months, and his pasty little girl, aged three years. Next day he regaled his fellow workers with elaborate recitals of his holiday hours.

“Believe me, that kid's a caution. Sixteen months old, and what does he do yesterday? He unfastens the ketch on the back-porch gate. We got a gate on the back porch, see.” (This frequent “see” which interlarded Elmer's verbiage was not used in an interrogatory way, but as a period, and by way of emphasis. His voice did not take the rising inflec-



tion as he uttered it.) "What does he do, he opens it. I come home, and the wife says to me: 'Say, you better get busy and fix a new ketch on that gate to the back porch. Little Elmer, first thing I know, he'd got it open to-day and was crawling out almost.' Say, can you beat that for a kid sixteen months——"

Nick had finished shaving, had donned his clean white soft shirt. His soft collar fitted to a miracle about his strong throat. Nick's sartorial effects were a triumph—on forty a week. "Say, can't you talk about nothing but that kid of yours? I bet he's a bum specimen at that. Runt, like his pa."

Elmer flung down his newspaper in honest indignation as Nick had wickedly meant he should. "Is that so! Why, we was wrastling round—me and him, see—last night on the floor, and what does he do, he raises his mitt and hands me a wallop in the stomick it like to knock the wind out of me. That's all. Sixteen months——"

"Yeh. I suppose this time next year he'll be boxing for money."

Elmer resumed his paper. "What do *you* know." His tone mingled pity with contempt.

Nick took a last critical survey of the cracked mirror's reflection and found it good. "Nothing, only this: you make me sick with your kids and your missus and your place. Say, don't you never have no fun?"

"Fun! Why, say, last Sunday we was out to the beach, and the kid swum out first thing you know——"

"Oh, shut up!" He was dressed now. He slapped his pockets. Harmonica. Cigarettes. Matches. Money. He was off, his long-visored cloth cap pulled jauntily over his eyes.

Elmer, bearing no rancour, flung a last idle query: "Where you going?"

"How should I know? Just bumming around. Bus is outa commission, and I'm outa luck."

He clattered down the stairs, whistling.

Next door for a shine at the Greek bootblack's. Enthroned on the dais, a minion at his feet, he was momentarily monarchical. How's the boy? Good? Same here. Down, his brief reign ended. Out into the bright noon-day glare of Fifty-third Street.

A fried-egg sandwich. Two blocks down and into the white-tiled lunchroom. He took his place in the row perched on stools in front of the white slab, his feet on the railing, his elbows on the counter. Four white-aproned vestals with blotchy skins performed rites over the steaming nickel urns, slid dishes deftly along the slick surface of the white slab, mopped up moisture with a sly grey rag. No nonsense about them. This was the rush hour. Hungry men from the shops and offices and garages of the

district were bent on food (not badinage). They ate silently, making a dull business of it. Coffee? What kinda pie do you want? No fooling here. "Hello, Jessie."

As she mopped the slab in front of him you noticed a slight softening of her features, intent so grimly on her task. "What's yours?"

"Bacon-and-egg sandwich. Glass of milk. Piece of pie. Blueberry."

Ordinarily she would not have bothered. But with him: "The blueberry ain't so good to-day, I noticed. Try the peach?"

"All right." He looked at her. She smiled. Incredibly, the dishes ordered seemed to leap out at her from nowhere. She crashed them down on the glazed white surface in front of him. The bacon-and-egg sandwich was served open-faced, an elaborate confection. Two slices of white bread, side by side. On one reposed a fried egg, hard, golden, delectable, indigestible. On the other three crisp curls of bacon. The ordinary order held two curls only. A dish so rich in calories as to make it food sufficient for a day. Jessie knew nothing of calories, nor did Nick. She placed a double order of butter before him—two yellow pats, moisture-beaded. As she scooped up his milk from the can you saw that the glass was but three quarters filled. From a deep crock she ladled a smaller scoop and

filled the glass to the top. The deep crock held cream. Nick glanced up at her again. Again Jessie smiled. A plain damsel, Jessie, and capable. She went on about her business. What's yours? Coffee with? White or rye? No nonsense about her. And yet: "Pie all right?"

"Yeh. It's good."

She actually blushed.

He finished, swung himself off the stool, nodded to, Jessie. She stacked his dishes with one lean, capable hand, mopped the slab with the other, but as she made for the kitchen she flung a glance at him over her shoulder.

"Day off?"

"Yeh."

"Some folks has all the luck."

He grinned. His teeth were strong and white and even. He walked toward the door with his light quick step, paused for a toothpick as he paid his check, was out again into the July sunlight. Her face became dull again.

Well, not one o'clock. Guessed he'd shoot a little pool. He dropped into Moriarty's cigar store. It was called a cigar store because it dealt in magazines, newspapers, soft drinks, golf balls, cigarettes, pool, billiards, chocolates, chewing gum, and cigars. In the rear of the store were four green-topped tables. three for pool and one for billiards. He

hung about aimlessly, watching the game at the one occupied table. The players were slim young men like himself, their clothes replicas of his own, their faces lean and somewhat hard. Two of them dropped out. Nick took a cue from the rack, shed his tight coat. They played under a glaring electric light in the heat of the day, yet they seemed cool, aloof, immune from bodily discomfort. It was a strangely silent game and as mirthless as that of the elfin bowlers in *Rip Van Winkle*. The slim-waisted shirted figures bent plastically over the table in the graceful postures of the game. You heard only the click of the balls, an occasional low-voiced exclamation. A solemn crew, and unemotional.

Now and then: "What's all the shootin' fur?"

"In she goes."

Nick, winner, tired of it in less than an hour. He bought a bottle of some acidulous drink just off the ice and refreshed himself with it, drinking from the bottle's mouth. He was vaguely restless, dissatisfied. Out again into the glare of two o'clock Fifty-third Street. He strolled up a block toward Lake Park Avenue. It was hot. He wished the bus wasn't sick. Might go in swimming, though. He considered this idly. Hurried steps behind him. A familiar perfume wafted to his senses. A voice nasal yet cooing. Miss Bauers. Miss Bauers on pleasure bent, palpably, being attired in the briefest

of silks, white-strapped slippers, white silk stockings, scarlet hat. The Green Front Grocery and Market closed for a half day each Thursday afternoon during July and August. Nicky had not availed himself of the knowledge.

"Well, if it ain't Nicky! I just seen you come out of Moriarty's as I was passing." (She had seen him go in an hour before and had waited a patient hour in the drug store across the street.) "What you doing around loose this hour the day, anyway?"

"I'm off 'safternoon."

"Are yuh? So'm I." Nicky said nothing. Miss Bauers shifted from one plump silken leg to the other. "What you doing?"

"Oh, nothing much."

"So'm I. Let's do it together." Miss Bauers employed the direct method.

"Well," said Nick, vaguely. He didn't object particularly. And yet he was conscious of some formless programme forming mistily in his mind—a programme that did not include the berouged, bepowdered, plump, and silken Miss Bauers.

"I phoned you this morning, Nicky. Twice."

"Yeh?"

"They said you wasn't in."

"Yeh?"

A hard young woman, Miss Bauers, yet simple:

powerfully drawn toward this magnetic and careless boy; powerless to forge chains strong enough to hold him. "Well, how about Riverview? I ain't been this summer."

"Oh, that's so darn far. Take all day getting there, pretty near."

"Not driving, it wouldn't."

"I ain't got the bus. Busted."

His apathy was getting on her nerves. "How about a movie, then?" Her feet hurt. It was hot.

His glance went up the street toward the Harper, down the street toward the Hyde Park. The sign above the Harper offered Mother o' Mine. The lettering above the Hyde Park announced Love's Sacrifice.

"Gawd, no," he made decisive answer.

Miss Bauers's frazzled nerves snapped. "You make me sick! Standing there. Nothing don't suit you. Say, I ain't so crazy to go round with you. Cheap guy! Prob'ly you'd like to go over to Wooded Island or something, in Jackson Park, and set on the grass and feed the squirrels. That'd be a treat for me, that would." She laughed a high, scornful tear-near laugh.

"Why—say——" Nick stared at her, and yet she felt he did not see her. A sudden peace came into his face—the peace of a longing fulfilled. He turned his head. A Lake Park Avenue street car

was roaring its way toward them. He took a step toward the roadway. "I got to be going."

Fear flashed its flame into Miss Bauers's pale blue eyes. "Going! How do you mean, going? Going where?"

"I got to be going." The car had stopped opposite them. His young face was stern, implacable. Miss Bauers knew she was beaten, but she clung to hope tenaciously, piteously. "I got to see a party, see?"

"You never said anything about it in the first place. Pity you wouldn't say so in the first place. Who you got to see, anyway?" She knew it was useless to ask. She knew she was beating her fists against a stone wall, but she must needs ask notwithstanding: "Who you got to see?"

"I got to see a party. I forgot." He made the car step in two long strides; had swung himself up. "So long!" The car door slammed after him. Miss Bauers, in her unavailing silks, stood disconsolate on the hot street corner.

He swayed on the car platform until Sixty-third Street was reached. There he alighted and stood a moment at the curb surveying idly the populous corner. He purchased a paper bag of hot peanuts from a vender's glittering scarlet and nickel stand, and crossed the street into the pathway that led to Jackson Park, munching as he went. In an open



space reserved for games some boys were playing baseball with much hoarse hooting and frenzied action. He drew near to watch. The ball, misdirected, sailed suddenly toward him. He ran backward at its swift approach, leaped high, caught it, and with a long curving swing, so easy as to appear almost effortless, sent it hurtling back. The lad on the pitcher's mound made as if to catch it, changed his mind, dodged, started after it.

The boy at bat called to Nick: "Heh, you! Wanna come on and pitch?"

Nick shook his head and went on.

He wandered leisurely along the gravel path that led to the park golf shelter. The wide porch was crowded with golfers and idlers. A foursome was teed up at the first tee. Nick leaned against a porch pillar waiting for them to drive. That old boy had pretty good practise swing. . . . Stiff, though. . . . Lookit that dame. Je's! I bet she takes fifteen shots before she ever gets on to the green. . . . There, that kid had pretty good drive. Must of been hundred and fifty, anyway. Pretty good for a kid.

Nick, in the course of his kaleidoscopic career, had been a caddie at thirteen in torn shirt and flapping knickers. He had played the smooth, expert, scornful game of the caddie with a natural swing from the lithe waist and a follow-through that was

the envy of the muscle-bound men who watched him. He hadn't played in years. The game no longer interested him. He entered the shelter lunchroom. The counters were lined with lean, brown, hungry men and lean, brown, hungry women. They were eating incredible dishes considering that the hour was 3 P. M. and the day a hot one. Corned-beef hash with a poached egg on top; wieners and potato salad; meat pies; hot roast beef sandwiches; steaming cups of coffee in thick white ware; watermelon. Nick slid a leg over a stool as he had done earlier in the afternoon. Here, too, the Hebes were of stern stuff, as they needs must be to serve these ravenous hordes of club swingers who swarmed upon them from dawn to dusk. Their task it was to wait upon the golfing male, which is man at his simplest—reduced to the least common denominator and shorn of all attraction for the female eye and heart. They represented merely hungry mouths, weary muscles, reaching fists. The waitresses served them as a capable attendant serves another woman's child—efficiently and without emotion.

"Blueberry pie à la mode," said Nick—"with strawberry ice cream."

Inured as she was to the horrors of gastronomic miscegenation, the waitress—an old girl—recoiled at this.

"Say, I don't think you'd like that. They don't

mix so very good. Why don't you try the peach pie instead with the strawberry ice cream—if you want strawberry?" He looked so young and cool and fresh.

"Blueberry," repeated Nick sternly, and looked her in the eye. The old waitress laughed a little and was surprised to find herself laughing. "'S for you to say." She brought him the monstrous mixture, and he devoured it to the last chromatic crumb.

"Nothing the matter with that," he remarked as she passed, dish-laden.

She laughed again tolerantly, almost tenderly. "Good thing you're young." Her busy glance lingered a brief moment on his face. He sauntered out.

Now he took the path to the right of the shelter, crossed the road, struck the path again, came to a rustic bridge that humped high in the middle, spanning a cool green stream, willow-bordered. The cool green stream was an emerald chain that threaded its way in a complete circlet about the sylvan spot known as Wooded Island, relic of World's Fair days.

The little island lay, like a thing under enchantment, silent, fragrant, golden, green, exquisite. Squirrels and blackbirds, rabbits and pigeons mingled in *Æsopian* accord. The air was warm and

still, held by the encircling trees and shrubbery. There was not a soul to be seen. At the far north end the two Japanese model houses, survivors of the exposition, gleamed white among the trees.

Nick stood a moment. His eyelids closed, languorously. He stretched his arms out and up deliciously, bringing his stomach in and his chest out. He took off his cap and stuffed it into his pocket. He strolled across the thick cool nap of the grass, deserting the pebble path. At the west edge of the island a sign said: "No One Allowed in the Shrubby." Ignoring 'it, Nick parted the branches, stopped and crept, reached the bank that sloped down to the cool green stream, took off his coat, and lay relaxed upon the ground. Above him the tree branches made a pattern against the sky. Little ripples lipped the shore. Scampering velvet-footed things, feathered things, winged things made pleasant stir among the leaves. Nick slept.

He awoke in half an hour refreshed. He lay there, thinking of nothing—a charming gift. He found a stray peanut in his pocket and fed it to a friendly squirrel. His hand encountered the cool metal of his harmonica. He drew out the instrument, placed his coat, folded, under his head, crossed his knees, one leg swinging idly, and began to play rapturously. He was perfectly happy. He played Gimme Love, whose jazz measures are stolen from Mendelssohn's

Spring Song. He did not know this. The leaves rustled. He did not turn his head.

"Hello, Pan!" said a voice. A girl came down the slope and seated herself beside him. She was not smiling.

Nick removed the harmonica from his lips and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "Hello who?"

"Hello, Pan."

"Wrong number, lady," Nick said, and again applied his lips to the mouth organ. The girl laughed then, throwing back her head. Her throat was long and slim and brown. She clasped her knees with her arms and looked at Nick amusedly. Nick thought she was a kind of homely little thing.

"Pan," she explained, "was a pagan deity. He played pipes in the woods."

"'S all right with me," Nick ventured, bewildered but amiable. He wished she'd go away. But she didn't. She began to take off her shoes and stockings. She went down to the water's edge, then, and paddled her feet. Nick sat up, outraged. "Say, you can't do that."

She glanced back at him over her shoulder. "Oh, yes, I can. It's so hot." She wriggled her toes ecstatically.

The leaves rustled again, briskly, unmistakably this time. A heavy tread. A rough voice. "Say,

looka here! Get out of there, you! What the——” A policeman, red-faced, wroth. “You can’t do that! Get outa here!”

It was like a movie, Nick thought.

The girl turned her head. “Oh, now, Mr. Elwood,” she said.

“Oh, it’s you, miss,” said the policeman. You would not have believed it could be the same policeman. He even giggled. “Thought you was away.”

“I was. In fact, I am, really. I just got sick of it and ran away for a day. Drove. Alone. The family’ll be wild.”

“All the way?” said the policeman, incredulously. “Say, I thought that looked like your car standing out there by the road; but I says no, she ain’t in town.” He looked sharply at Nick, whose face had an Indian composure, though his feelings were mixed. “Who’s this?”

“He’s a friend of mine. His name’s Pan.” She was drying her feet with an inadequate rose-coloured handkerchief. She crept crabwise up the bank, and put on her stockings and slippers.

“Why’n’t you come out and set on a bench?” suggested the policeman, worriedly.

The girl shook her head. “In Arcadia we don’t sit on benches. I should think you’d know that. Go on away, there’s a dear. I want to talk to this—to Pan.”

He persisted. "What'd your pa say, I'd like to know!" The girl shrugged her shoulders. Nick made as though to rise. He was worried. A nut, that's what. She pressed him down again with a hard brown hand.

"Now it's all right. He's going. Old Fuss!" The policeman stood a brief moment longer. Then the foliage rustled again. He was gone. The girl sighed, happily. "Play that thing some more, will you? You're a wiz at it, aren't you?"

"I'm pretty good," said Nick, modestly. Then the outrageousness of her conduct struck him afresh. "Say, who're you, anyway?"

"My name's Berry—short for Bernice. . . . What's yours, Pan?"

"Nick—that is—Nick."

"Ugh, terrible! I'll stick to Pan. What d'you do when you're not Panning?" Then, at the bewilderment in his face: "What's your job?"

"I work in the Ideal Garage. Say, you're pretty nosey, ain't you?"

"Yes, pretty. . . . That accounts for your nails, h'm?" She looked at her own brown paws. "'Bout as bad as mine. I drove one hundred and fifty miles to-day."

"Ya-as, you did!"

"I did! Started at six. And I'll probably drive back to-night."

"You're crazy!"

"I know it," she agreed, "and it's wonderful.  
. . . Can you play the Tommy Toddle?"

"Yeh. It's kind of hard, though, where the runs are. I don't get the runs so very good." He played it. She kept time with head and feet. When he had finished and wiped his lips:

"Elegant!" She took the harmonica from him, wiped it brazenly on the much-abused, rose-coloured handkerchief and began to play, her cheeks puffed out, her eyes round with effort. She played the Tommy Toddle, and her runs were perfect. Nick's chagrin was swallowed by his admiration and envy.

"Say, kid, you got more wind than a factory whistle. Who learned you to play?"

She struck her chest with a hard brown fist.  
"Tennis. . . . Tim taught me."

"Who's Tim?"

"The—a chauffeur."

Nick leaned closer. "Say, do you ever go to the dances at Englewood Masonic Hall?"

"I never have."

"'Jah like to go some time?"

"I'd love it." She grinned up at him, her teeth flashing white in her brown face.

"It's swell here," he said, dreamily. "Like the woods?"

"Yes."



"Winter, when it's cold and dirty, I think about how it's here summers. It's like you could take it out of your head and look at it whenever you wanted to."

"Endymion."

"Huh?"

"A man said practically the same thing the other day. Name of Keats."

"Yeh?"

"He said: 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'"

"That's one way putting it," he agreed, graciously.

Unsmilingly she reached over with one slim forefinger, as if compelled, and touched the blond hairs on Nick's wrist. Just touched them. Nick remained motionless. The girl shivered a little, deliciously. She glanced at him shyly. Her lips were provocative. Thoughtlessly, blindly, Nick suddenly flung an arm about her, kissed her. He kissed her as he had never kissed Miss Bauers—as he had never kissed Miss Ahearn, Miss Olson, or just Gertie. The girl did not scream, or push him away, or slap him, or protest, or giggle as would have the above-mentioned young ladies. She sat breathing rather fast, a tinge of scarlet showing beneath the tan.

"Well, Pan," she said, low-voiced, "you're running true to form, anyway." She eyed him appraisingly. "Your appeal is in your virility, I suppose. Yes."

"My what?"

She rose. "I've got to go."

Panic seized him. "Say, don't drive back to-night, huh? Wherever it is you've got to go. You ain't driving back to-night?"

She made no answer; parted the bushes, was out on the gravel path in the sunlight, a slim, short-skirted, almost childish figure. He followed. They crossed the bridge, left the island, reached the roadway almost in silence. At the side of the road was a roadster. Its hood was the kind that conceals power. Its lamps were two giant eyes rimmed in precious metal. Its line spelled strength. Its body was foreign. Nick's engine-wise eyes saw these things at a glance.

"That your car?"

"Yes."

"Gosh!"

She unlocked it, threw in the clutch, shifted, moved. "Say!" was wrung from Nick helplessly. She waved at him. "Good-bye, Pan." He stared, stricken. She was off swiftly, silently; flashed around a corner; was hidden by the trees and shrubs.

He stood a moment. He felt bereaved, cheated. Then a little wave of exaltation shook him. He wanted to talk to someone. "Gosh!" he said again. He glanced at his wrist. Five-thirty. He guessed

he'd go home. He guessed he'd go home and get one of Ma's dinners. One of Ma's dinners and talk to Ma. The Sixty-third Street car. He could make it and back in plenty time.

Nick lived in that section of Chicago known as Englewood, which is not so sylvan as it sounds, but appropriate enough for a faun. Not only that; he lived in S. Green Street, Englewood. S. Green Street, near Seventieth, is almost rural with its great elms and poplars, its frame cottages, its back gardens. A neighbourhood of thrifty, foreign-born fathers and mothers, many children, tree-lined streets badly paved. Nick turned in at a two-story brown frame cottage. He went around to the back. Ma was in the kitchen.

Nick's presence at the evening meal was an uncertain thing. Sometimes he did not eat at home for a week, excepting only his hurried early breakfast. He rarely spent an evening at home, and when he did used the opportunity for making up lost sleep. Pa never got home from work until after six. Nick liked his dinner early and hot. On his rare visits his mother welcomed him like one of the Gracchi. Mother and son understood each other wordlessly, having much in common. You would not have thought it of her (forty-six bust, forty waist, measureless hips), but Ma was a nymph at heart. Hence Nick.

"Hello, Ma!" She was slamming expertly about the kitchen.

"Hello, yourself," said Ma. Ma had a line of slang gleaned from her numerous brood. It fell strangely from her lips. Ma had never quite lost a tinge of foreign accent, though she had come to America when a girl. A hearty, zestful woman, savouring life with gusto, undiminished by child-bearing and hard work. "Eating home, Dewey?" She alone used his given name.

"Yeh, but I gotta be back by seven-thirty. Got anything ready?"

"Dinner ain't, but I'll get you something. Plenty. Platter ham and eggs and a quick fry. Cherry cobbler's done. I'll fix you some." (Cherry cobbler is shortcake with a soul.)

He ate enormously at the kitchen table, she hovering over him.

"What's the news, Dewey?"

"Ain't none." He ate in silence. Then: "How old was you when you married Pa?"

"Me? Say, I wasn't no more'n a kid. I gotta laugh when I think of it."

"What was Pa earning?"

She laughed a great hearty laugh, dipping a piece of bread sociably in the ham fat on the platter as she stood by the table, just to bear him company.

"Say, earn! If he'd of earned what you was

earning now, we'd of thought we was millionaires. Time Etty was born he was pulling down thirteen a week, and we saved on it." She looked at him suddenly, sharply. "Why?"

"Oh, I was just wondering."

"Look what good money he's getting now! If I was you, I wouldn't stick around no old garage for what they give you. You could get a good job in the works with Pa; first thing you know you'd be pulling down big money. You're smart like that with engines. . . . Takes a lot of money now-  
adays for feller to get married."

"You *tell* 'em," agreed Nick. He looked up at her, having finished eating. His glance was almost tender. "How'd you come to marry Pa, anyway? You and him's so different."

The nymph in Ma leaped to the surface and stayed there a moment, sparkling, laughing, dimpling. "Oh, I dunno. I kept running away and he kept running after. Like that."

He looked up again quickly at that. "Yeh. That's it. Fella don't like to have no girl chasing him all the time. Say, he likes to do the chasing himself. Ain't that the truth?"

"You *tell* 'em!" agreed Ma. A great jovial laugh shook her. Heavy-footed now, but light of heart.

Suddenly: "I'm thinking of going to night school. Learn something. I don't know nothing."

"You do, too, Dewey!"

"Aw, wha'd I know? I never had enough schooling. Wished I had."

"Who's doings was it? You wouldn't stay. Wouldn't go no more than sixth reader and quit. Nothing wouldn't get you to go."

He agreed gloomily. "I know it. I don't know what nothing is. Uh—Arcadia—or—now—vitality or nothing."

"Oh, that comes easy," she encouraged him, "when you begin once."

He reached for her hand gratefully. "You're a swell cook, Ma." He had a sudden burst of generosity, of tenderness. "Soon's the bus is fixed I'll take you joy-riding over to the lake."

Ma always wore a boudoir cap of draggled lace and ribbon for motoring. Nick almost never offered her a ride. She did not expect him to.

She pushed him playfully. "Go on! You got plenty young girls to take riding, not your ma."

"Oh, girls!" he said, scornfully. Then in another tone: "Girls."

He was off. It was almost seven. Pa was late. He caught a car back to Fifty-third Street. Elmer was lounging in the cool doorway of the garage. Nick, in sheer exuberance of spirits, squared off, doubled his fists, and danced about Elmer in a

semicircle, working his arms as a prizefighter does, warily. He jabbed at Elmer's jaw playfully.

"What you been doing," inquired that long-suffering gentleman, "makes you feel so good? Where you been?"

"Oh, nowheres. Bumming round. Park."

He turned in the direction of the stairway. Elmer lounged after him. "Oh, say, dame's been calling you for the last hour and a half. Like to busted the phone. Makes me sick."

"Aw, Bauers."

"No, that wasn't the name. Name's Mary or Berry, or something like that. A dozen times, I betcha. Says you was to call her as soon as you come in. Drexel 47—wait a min't'—yeh—that's right—Drexel 473——"

"Swell chanst," said Nick. Suddenly his buoyancy was gone. His shoulders drooped. His cigarette dangled limp. Disappointment curved his lips, burdened his eyes. "*Swell* chanst!"





SO THERE!  
BY FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# SO THERE!

## To His Lyre

AD LYRAM

Horace: Book I, Ode 32

*"Poscimur. Siquid vacui sub umbra"—*

If ever, as I struck thy strings,  
My song has sounded sempiternal,  
Help me, my Lyre, to glorious things  
For this matutinary journal.

Thine erstwhile owner versified  
War, Love, and Wine in panegyric;  
And folks in Lesbos often cried,  
"That kid can chuck a nasty lyric!"

Then aid me, Lute, beginning now!  
Give theme for colophon or leader;  
And some day there may grace my brow  
The laurel from some Grateful Reader.

## Life

On the way to my daily occupation,  
Passing adown a chill, a dark way,  
Entered I into the subway station  
Known as Cathedral Parkway.

Ride who will on the elevated,  
Tramp who will on the open road,  
I took the subway, be it stated.  
It's nearest to my abode.

Life, I thought, is a game of cricket;  
Life, I mused, is a thing alive.  
I bought a ticket, I bought a ticket;  
I think that I purchased five.

Those are the things that seethe and fo-  
ment;

Those are the things that weight my  
brow—

Not that I think they're of any moment,  
But Poetry's like that now.

## LIFE

I waited six minutes upon that landing,  
And at 9:42 I took an express;  
Women and men were seated and stand-  
ing,  
Thinking of things, I guess.

And I looked over a gentleman's  
shoulder—  
He was probably forty-six years of age—  
And read—though he may have been six  
months older—  
All of the *Times* front page.

But something happened on which I  
reckoned  
Not. I was reading, I said, the *Times*,  
When the gentleman got off at Seventy-  
Second,  
So I stood thinking of rhymes.

There were many persons standing near  
me,  
Dull appearing and silly of face;  
But in modern poetry, thought I, dear  
me!  
Nothing is commonplace.

## SO THERE!

If I describe them, not acutely,  
Telling, at length, what clothes they  
    wear,  
Manneredly, prosily, overminutely—  
Merely that they were there.

I shall achieve quite a reputation  
For seeing the Calm above the Strife;  
I'll be a Poet of Observation,  
One who has Looked on Life;

One who can give interpretation,  
One to invest the crude with grace,  
One to—but then I reached my station.  
It was, I recall, Park Place.

And I walked to the office, far from  
    skittish,  
(I walk that way, as a general rule),  
And I wished, I wished I were one of the  
    British  
Bards of the modern school.

A bard who could take his pen and ink it,  
Listing things in a one-two-three  
Order, till critics and men would think it  
Utterest poetry.

## LIFE

Oh for the storms of wild applause it  
Would receive from the human race,  
Most of whom'd think it was great be-  
cause it  
Merely was commonplace.

Still, on my way to my occupation,  
Passed I adown a chill, a dark way.  
Entered I into the subway station  
Known as Cathedral Parkway.

## Ballade of The Easily Influenced

As firm as a boulder am I,  
I'm stolid and solid and gray;  
My standards are moveless and high,  
My motto's forever and aye.  
And yet, when I go to a play  
With a villain indecent and grim,  
Whose aim is to cheat and to slay,  
I think I'm a little like him.

I read all the poems, and sigh  
That Lucy is buried away;  
I weep at the Byron Good-by,  
I read Dr. Watts, and I pray;  
I'm faithless with Edna Millay;  
With Whittier I'm earnest and prim.  
. . . Been reading some Shakespeare  
to-day—  
I think I'm a little like him.



## THE EASILY INFLUENCED

J. Cæsar, I read, was a guy  
Who trembled a bit in a fray;  
Napoleon, they tell me, would cry  
If things went a little astray;  
King Henry the Eighth was a gay  
Old goof of uxorious whim—  
I chuck him a little bouquet;  
I think I'm a little like him.

### L'ENVOI

O Queen, I am commonest clay,  
My lamp is a-flicker and dim.  
There's no one of whom I can't say:  
"I think I'm a little like him."

## A Spring Lay of Ancient Rome

Horace: Book I, Ode 4

*"Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni"*

Winter's turned his cold and stony  
Countenance the other way;  
Bathing has begun at Coney;  
Blow the zephyrs down the bay.

Cattle seek again the pasture,  
Life no longer is congealed;  
Spring approaches; come and cast your  
Eye upon the verdant field.

Venus—she of Cytherea—  
Leads the dance beneath the moon,  
And the Graces tread in glee a  
Syncopated rigadoon.

"Say it with myrtle!" be your motto;  
Buy a nobby vernal lid.  
Pray to Faunus in the grotto,  
Kill for him a lamb or kid.

## A SPRING LAY

Be you owner of a fortune  
Or as poor in kale' as I'm,  
Death (the Reaper) will importune  
You, and get you in your time.

Say "Farewell"—ere Pluto call for  
You to bear you to his shades—  
"Lycidas, whom the flappers fall for  
(Not to say the Roman blades)."

## To a Roman Vamp

AD LYDIAM

Horace: Book I, Ode 8

*"Lydia dic, per omnes"*

Tell me, Lydia, why you ruin  
Sybaris with your burning love?  
Once he was a discus bruin;  
Once he loved the sun above.

Soft the sinew, gone the fibre  
Of his green, athletic youth;  
Now he fears the yellow Tiber—  
He who might have rivalled Ruth!

Sulks he as the son of Thetis  
At the Trojan falling did;  
This the burden of my treatise:  
Why don't you lay off him, Lyd?

## On the Fleetness of Time

AD LEUCONOEN

Horace: Book I, Ode 11

*"Tu ne quaesieris—scire nefas—quem mihi,  
quem tibi"*

Do not ask, for none can tell you  
Ever what the end will be.  
All the ouijas of Chaldee  
Rarely any future spell you.  
Either Jupiter will knell you  
Soon or late. The moments flee.  
This my jazzy recipe:  
Dance or ever the Reaper fell you.

O Leuconoe, let us hurry!  
Reap the harvest of to-day.  
Only those who fret and worry  
Throw eternity away.  
Here's the old Horatian habit:  
Youth's elusive; better grab it.

## A Warning

Horace: Book I, Ode 5

*"Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa"*

Tell me, my Pyrrha, what youth is now  
chasing thee?

Who is thy flowered and redolent slave?  
Where's the cool grotto in which he's  
embracing thee?

Who is the cause of thy permanent wave?

Often, how often, he'll call thee per-  
fidious!

Frequently rail at the mutable gods!  
He who is thrall to thy graces insidious,  
Playing a game against terrible odds!

Who for thy favour is eager and sedulous,  
Thinking thee pliable, deeming thee  
kind,

Loving and worshipping thee—the poor,  
credulous

Fish, to thy falsity utterly blind!

## A WARNING

Here in the temple of Neptune, I  
dedicate

Weeds that are dripping with warning,  
and damp.

DANGER! LOOK OUT FOR THE  
SIREN! I'll predicate

Pyrrha's a plausible, beautiful vamp.

## Horace Flackhouse

Book I, Ode 22

*"Integer vitae, scelerisque purus"*

BY OUR OWN ED HOWE

Horace Flackhouse has lived in town all his life. He is seventy-two years old. He has always paid his debts and kept single, though there have been rumors that Horace owed a lot of money, and, since 1879, he has been reported engaged on an average of once a year. In 1878, Horace, who played the guitar, was courting Lalage Quinn; and as he was serenading her one night, playing "In Old Madrid," Old Man Quinn's dog looked at him and ran away.

Horace never married Lalage, but he says that no matter where he is he will go on serenading her.



## Cold Weather Stuff

AD THALIARCHUM

Horace: Book I, Ode 9

*"Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum"*

### I

Soracte's crest is snowy, Thaliarchus;  
The weather bureau says, "Continued  
Cold."

Let's sit around the heater and—in any  
merry metre—  
Imbibe a little stuff that isn't sold.

Why fret about the future, Thaliarchus?  
Gather ye roses (Herrick) while ye  
may!

There's nothing quite so pleasant as the  
brimming, vivid present;  
The time to do your living is Today.

## SO THERE!

It's evening on the Campus, Thaliarch-  
us;

The girls are out in couples—yes,  
in twelves—

I'd make a tidy gamble if we took a  
little amble

We might run into merriment our-  
selves.

## II

How shining white Soracte shines!  
Ice are the streams, the woods are snowy  
Decant the best of Sabine wines!  
Fill up the grate, the night is blowy.

As to the rest, leave that to them  
Who keep the cypresses from shaking.  
The sunrise of the next a. m.  
Is not a thing of human making.

Youth yet is yours! Scorn not the dance!  
Your daily exercise continue;  
And don't say there is no Romance  
As long as there is breath within you.

## COLD WEATHER STUFF

Come, Thaliarchus, let us go  
And take a walk upon the Campus,  
And give the girls the double-o,  
And let them, Thaliarchus, vamp us.

## To Mæcenās

Horace: Epode XIV

*"Mollis inertia cur tantam diffuderit imis"*

Mæcenās, you ask why my versified task  
I frankly, defiantly shirk;  
You think a Lethean decoction might be  
an  
Excuse for the slump in my work.

It's Cupid whose curse puts a crimp in  
my verse;  
It's Love that has muted my lyre.  
Well, didn't Anacreon burn with a—  
*sacre!*—  
Undying, unquenchable fire?

He'd frequently tell as he sang to the  
shell  
How deeply, how hotly he burned.  
You needn't act haughty yourself.  
You've been naughty;  
You've sighed and you've ached and  
you've burned.

## TO MÆCENAS

Be glad that the dame who arouses your  
flame

Is fairer than Helen of Troy.

For Phryne, a teaser, I fret. But O  
Cæsar!

O my! O Mæcenas! O boy!

## To the Polyandrous Lydia

Horace: Book I, Ode 13

*"Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi—"*

Oh Lydia, when I hear you rave  
About the arms, the rosy neck  
Of Telephus, the vamping knave,  
I cry, "Oh heck!"

No longer can I check mine ire;  
Unheeded rise the tears that flow  
Over my features, with the fire  
Of passion's woe.

I weep when on your shoulders white  
I see the marks of drunken grips;  
The traces of the madman's bite  
Upon your lips.

Lydia, my love, attend my song;  
Simple it is, nor hieroglyph:  
He used you rough, he done you  
wrong—  
The great big stiff!

## TO THE POLYANDROUS LYDIA

Thrice happy Jack that holds his Jill  
Close to his unpolygamous heart!  
Thrice blessèd they who cleave until  
Death do them part!

## In Praise of Simplicity

Propertius: Book I, Elegy 2

*"Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo et  
tenuis Coa veste movere sinus?"*

Why, my life, delight to go forth  
With a permanent wave, and so forth?  
Why, my dear, attempt to stir us  
With a Coan silk susurrus?

What avails to soak your tresses  
In these Syrian myrrhy messes?  
Forty tons of bought cosmetic  
Cannot make you more æsthetic.

Nothing the modistes can sew you  
Fairer than yourself can show you.  
Love, undecked, has only loathing  
For an art whose end is clothing.

See the colors Earth is showing!  
Ivy in its greenness growing,



## IN PRAISE OF SIMPLICITY

And the lovely wild arbutus—  
How the hues of nature suit us!

See the gems the wanton giver,  
Nature, sets along the river;  
And the songlets of the birdies  
Nor Debussy's are nor Verdi's.

Phœbe flamed the heart of Castor  
By no paint nor beauty plaster;  
Hillaïra, winning Pollux,  
Looked not like the Midnight Frollucks.

Though she wore no rouge nor jewel,  
Idas fought a bitter duel  
For Evenus's fair daughter,  
Phœbus also having sought her.

By no brilliance false or phony  
Hippodamia's matrimony  
Was achieved; all un beholden  
They to gems and trinkets golden.

Count me equal, bone and sinew,  
To the rogues that seek to win you.  
Be not quite so free and flirty;  
Be content with your *Propertie*

## SO THERE!

Sing—by Phœbus!—sweetly, gaily!  
Strum the Aonian ukulele!  
Then, if frippery you'll eschew,  
I will stay in love with you.

## Thoughts on Spring

Horace: Book I, Ode 4

*"Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni"*

Gone the days of ten below;  
Melted all the winter's snow,  
Night- and day-boats sail the river;  
Chugs again the farmer's flivver.

Grazes now the lowing cow;  
And the rube resumes the plow,  
Now, by lunar lumination,  
Venus leads a gay saltation.

Twine the flowers, the myrtle green,  
Round the redolent, shining bean!  
Bring, regardless of the prices,  
Lambs or kids for sacrifices.

Ah, the knock of Death is sure  
At the door of rich and poor;  
As the shades of life grow deeper,  
Comes the celebrated Reaper.

## SO THERE!

Life, my Sextius, is too short  
For a lot of grief or sport.  
Darkness, chilly and pneumatic,  
Whelms you in the house Plutonic;

Where shall be no merry throws  
Of the Galloping Dominoes;  
Nor shall Lycidas, the cherished,  
Glad the vision of the perished.

## Silver Threads Among the Gold

Horace: Book I, Ode 25

*"Parcius iunctas quatient fenestras—"*

Insistent lads no longer shake  
Thy shutters, keeping thee awake,  
And no one ever now knocks at  
The once willing door into thy flat.

Less frequently the lover cries  
"Sleep not, my Lydia! Come, arise!"  
The time will come when, old, forlorn,  
Thou'lt weep about thy lovers' scorn.

On moonless nights the flames will rage  
About thy heart; and, bent with age,  
Thou'lt fret that lads delight in myrtle  
And ivy more than in thy kirtle.

## To Chloë

Book I, Ode 23

*"Vitas binnuleo me similis, Chloë"*

Like a frightened fawn, my Chloë,  
Looking for his timid dam,  
Fearful of the breezes blowy,  
Come you never where I am.

Tiger am I not nor lion.  
Leave your ma; you're old enough.  
Cast your wise and pretty eye on  
Him who wrote this tender stuff.

## **Lullaby**

If, my dear, you seek to slumber,  
Count of stars an endless number;  
If you still continue wakeful,  
Count the drops that make a lakeful;  
Then, if vigilance yet above you  
Hover, count the times I love you;  
And if slumber still repel you,  
Count the times I do not tell you.

## Valentine

Silver stars above me,  
Sun above me, shine!  
Lady, if you love me,  
Be my valentine.

And, my dear, if in you  
Leaps no answering flame,  
Those things will continue  
Shining just the same.



## **On Surveying New Equipment**

Mine is a new, a glistening desk;  
And sharp and shiny are my shears;  
I have some new and picturesque  
Compeers.

New is the lovely type machine  
On which these limpid lines I write;  
All my equipment's new and clean  
And bright.

Yet though the weapons of the game  
Are new, that may not be enough  
If I keep on and write the same  
Old stuff.

## To a Big Girl

Lady who beneath my window bats the  
balls about the court,  
Shouting in your loud hysteria at the  
glory of the sport,  
Shouting "Ready," "Thirty forty,"  
"That was good," and "What's the  
score?"  
Waking me, unless it's raining, at exactly  
7:04:

Lady, as I look this morning at your  
wide and ample frame,  
Moving slowly and ineptly as you try  
to play the game,  
"Though your strength," I muse, "is  
little, though your tennis skill is scant,  
That, to you, is unmomentous; yours is  
but the wish to bant."

## TO A BIG GIRL

Mine the hope you'll be successful if that  
be the goal you seek;

Mine the wish—if it be yours—you'll  
drop a dozen pounds a week.

Lady, as I lie and listen, comes mine  
earnest wish for you:

Just a shadow's what I hope the game  
of tennis wears you to.

**“When the Hounds of Spring Are  
on Winter’s Traces”**

Muriel, as the month of April,  
With his celebrated showers,  
Fills the fatuously gay prill,  
Weeps upon the vernal flowers;  
Shines the sun a little stronger,  
Grow the nights a little short-  
Er, the days a little longer  
For the purposes of sport.

Lisp the leaves—you know your Swin-  
burne?  
Wakes the year—you know your  
Gray?  
And the sun that makes the skin burn  
Beams upon the links to-day.  
Pipe the shepherds in the meadow;  
Grow the grasses; melts the ice;  
And the couch, or Li'l Ol' Beddo,  
Seems particularly nice.

## THE HOUNDS OF SPRING

Rain and sun are softly blended;  
Blows the gentle breeze and warm;  
Bitter winter now has ended;  
Gone the days of snow and storm.  
O my Muriel, at the shore, on  
All the mountains it is spring!  
Which is known to every moron  
Who has ever read a thing.

## Ballade of a Polygamous Heart

Sylvia, Gwendolyn, and Flo;  
Janet and Marie;  
Hilda, Mary Jane, and Jo;  
Belle, Andromache;  
Frances, Katharine, and Bee;  
Blanche and Caroline;  
Gladys, Emma, Lalage—  
Be my Valentine!

Ethel, Edna, Doris, O-  
Phelia, Dorothy,  
Winifred, Keziah, Lo-  
La, Penelope,  
Maida, Margaret, and Ney-  
Sa and Geraldine;  
Sally, Ruth, and Emily—  
Be my Valentine!

## A POLYGAMOUS HEART

Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Trow,  
Mrs. Cassidy,  
Miss McComas, Miss LeVeau,  
Mrs. McAttee,  
Mrs. Ferber, Miss DuPree,  
Mrs. Rosenstein,  
Mrs. Glass and Miss McGee—  
Be my Valentine!

### L'ENVOI

Queens and princesses, to ye  
Goes this heart of mine;  
Willow waly, woe is me!  
Be my Valentine!

## **The Atmospheric Complex**

Give me the balmy breezes!

Give me the raging storm!

Give me the gale that freezes!

Give me the zephyrs warm!

Give me the searing tropic

Wind on my cheek and hair!

And, while we're on the topic,

Give me the air.



## A Cure for Insomnia

Laura, my love, when you recite  
With azure orbs ashine, aglisten,  
The dream you had the other night,  
I do not listen.

My Postumus, when you explain  
The virtues of your car; how cheap  
Its upkeep is, I cannot feign . . .  
I fall asleep.

And when, Belinda, you essay  
To tell me of the current shows,  
Weaving the plot of every play,  
My dear, I doze.

And when, O John, you tell this bard  
Of poker pots you used to take—  
With all details—well, I can hard-  
Ly keep awake.

SO THERE!

Trite though these tales, my sweet Miss  
Smith,  
Gold are they from a fairy hoard,  
To your experiences with  
The Ouija board.

## Spring Roses and Thorns

Spring, with her proverbial fires,  
(*I shall have to buy some tires*),  
Warms me to my vernal singing.  
(*Both my racquets need restringing.*)

Now from winter's fastness freed,  
(*Oh, the summer suit I need!*)  
Comes the spring, destroying reason.  
(*Oh, my shoes of yesterseason!*)

Welcome, spring, and winter, hence!  
(*Tennis balls cost fifty cents.*)  
Spring is here, O sweet my coz!  
(*Roses, seven bucks a doz.*)

## To Señor Vicente Blasco Ibáñez

["Every American man is afraid of his wife. . . .  
Every American man has a mental picture of his wife  
standing behind the door with a rolling pin, either  
literally or figuratively, speaking, according to social  
standards. What the country needs is a second eman-  
cipator.]"—SEÑOR VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ.

Man of Andalusian letters,  
When you speak about the gyves  
And the shackles and the fetters  
Put upon us by our wives;  
When you tell us we are made of  
Weak and malleable clay,  
And assert we are afraid of  
Those whom we obey;

When you say our one ambition  
Is to mollify and please;  
That our usual position  
Is upon our bended knees;

VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

When you tell us that the tearful  
Woman melts the icy heart,  
That we quiver, ever fearful  
Lest the storm may start;

When you say we ought to beat 'em,  
Ought to pull the cave man stuff;  
That our duty is to treat 'em,  
As the vulgar have it, rough—  
With the things that you observe I'd  
Be the last to pick a fight,  
If I only had the nerve, I'd  
Say that you were right.

## It Might Have Been

*If Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had been F.  
Scott Fitzgerald.*

Maiden! with the glistening eyes,  
Wherein belladonna lies,  
Lamping, vamping all the guys!

Thou whose locks, as black as tar,  
Once outshone the vesper star,  
Waved and bobbed and darkened are!

Standing, with exotic feet,  
At Broadway and Warren Street,  
Kid, I'll say thou'rt pretty sweet!

*If Francis W. Bourdillon had been J. V. A. Weaver.*

Some starry night it is. I'll say it is.  
Must be a million twinklers out to-night;  
But it got dark just as the sun went  
down.

## IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Say, kid, this is the way I dope it out:  
I 'got a million twinklers in my nut  
To think with; and one single beatin'  
heart.

But—get me—I don't grant the bean a  
thing,  
But if you put the rollers under me  
Or said, "Lay off!" I'll tell the world  
I'd croak.

## Three Cheers: A Patriotic Poem

I

Sometimes o' this here country I don't  
feel too all-fired proud,

An' then I git to thinkin' an' I say there  
ain't no cloud

But it has a silver linin', an' your  
"Uncle Dudley" knows

There ain't no thorn without nearby  
there also is a rose.

So when I git to worryin', an' I'm  
heartsick an' depressed

Because the Nation's favorite poet is  
this here Eddie Guest,

I steal a crumb o' comfort that dispels  
my salty tears:

Eddie Guest was born in England, an'  
I give three rousin' cheers.



## THREE CHEERS

### II

---

My heart sinks pretty dad-burned low when I, a patriot, am faced with what the people like; and so I rail about the public taste. I read the junk that poets sing in papers and in magazines, and yell, "The folks don't know a thing and solid ivory are their beans. They want no pep, they want no salt, they just want predigested hay; their favorite poet's Uncle Walt, who sings the same song every day. A bunch of boobs," I sadly thought, "the folks of these United States! They fall for this Masonic rot that on my finer senses grates." But Walt was born in Canaday, and so my tabors and my pipes a patriotic tune will play the while I sing "The Stars and Stripes."

---

## SO THERE!

### III

My soul is sick of Alaska Dick and  
Perilous Yukon Ben,  
And my stomach reels at the faro deals  
up there where men are men;  
And I'm sicker than hell of Painted Nell  
and the woman whose life is waste,  
And my throat goes dry as I scream and  
cry, "A curse on the public taste!"  
But, pal, a word: This Service bird, as  
I learned the other day,  
Is a British guy. "Hooray," say I,  
"Hooray for the U. S. A.!"

## Folk Songs

### I

*(From the Liberian)*

Hush, little child,  
Weep no longer;  
Lie here on your mother's arm,  
Softly,  
Hush, little child.

### II

*(From the Ecuadorian of Rinaldo Moreno\*)*

Weep no longer, little child,  
Hush.  
Lie softly here  
On your mother's arm.  
Hush, little child.

\*Rinaldo Moreno, Ecuador's foremost poet (1829-1898), was born at Vermecelli, a hamlet hard by Quito, in 1829. His parents were poor peasants, but young Moreno worked his way through the University of Ecuador, where his lyric ability won him the distinction of being class poet. The "Lullaby" is perhaps his best known poem, its poignant simplicity and sheer arrestingness giving it a stark distinction.

# SO THERE!

## III

*(From the Brazilian of Donald McTavish\*)*

Hush, little child,  
Slumber softly  
On your mother's arm.  
Do not cry.  
Hush, little child.

\*Mr. McTavish was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1829. He is still living there and, although "Lullaby" is his best known poem, he has published a large volume of verse, entitled "Poems." He never has had any children, and the uncannily keen imagination shown in "Lullaby" is considered remarkable by most critics.

## Glee

*(In the following song, the music to which is  
Sullivan's, C signifies Capital and L Labor)*

See how the Fates their gifts allot,  
For C is happy—L is not.  
Yet L is worthy, you'll agree,  
Of more prosperity than C.  
Is L more worthy?  
Oh, dear me!  
He ought to have far more than C.

Yet C is happy!  
Oh, so happy!  
Jeering, Ha! ha!  
Fleering, Ha! ha!  
Profiteering, Ha! ha! ha! ha!  
Ever joyous, gay, and free,  
Happy, undeserving C!

If I were Fortune—which I'm not—  
L should enjoy C's happy lot,

SO THERE!

And C should languish in a cell,  
That is, assuming I am L.

But *should* C languish?

Ay, in hell!

(Of course, assuming I am L.)

L should be happy!

Oh, so happy!

Smiting, Ha! ha!

Fighting, Ha! ha!

Dynamiting, Ha! ha! ha! ha!

But in misery he must dwell,

Wretched, meritorious L!

## From the Health Anthology

Curlilocks, Curlilocks, wilt thou be  
mine?

A piece of dry toast every morning at  
nine,

And sit on a cushion and sew a fine  
seam,

And cut out all butter fats, sugar, and  
cream.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,  
Bake me some gluten as fast as you can;  
Tuesday I had but a jigger of tea,  
And half of an orange for Tommy and  
me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Simple Simon met a pieman  
On one of the principal streets.  
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,  
"I dassen't eat no sweets."

\* \* \* \* \*

## SO THERE!

Sing a song of proteins,  
A pocket full of rye;  
Four-and-twenty calories  
Boiled in a pie.

When the pie was opened  
The birds began to bleat:  
"Isn't that a dreadful dish  
For any one to eat?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard  
To get her poor self some dinner;  
She had butter and lamb and some pastry and ham,  
And that's why she didn't get thinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

Little Tommy Tucker  
Yearns for his supper:  
What may he eat?  
Toast without butter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,  
Stole a pig and away he run;



## THE HEALTH ANTHOLOGY

"Go on," said he to his wife, "and fry  
it."

"Nope," said she; "you're on a diet."

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a man in our town,  
And he was wondrous wise;  
He was overweight, and so he took  
A lot of exercise.

And when he lost a lot of weight,  
With all his might and main  
He rushed into a restaurant  
And put it on again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jack Sprat could eat no fat;  
Eat sweets? He was unable.  
And people used to say of him  
He set a skimpy table.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mary had a little ham,  
Some chicken à la King,  
Some eggs supreme, a glass of cream,  
And not another thing.

## **A Not Too Deep Sea Chantey**

Then it's O to be on the salty sea with  
the breeze abaft my cheek!

And it's O for the sport of the wind  
aport (or a-lee) for about a week!

As the passengers walk on the deck and  
talk of matters wild or tame,

And seven or eight of us fool with fate  
in a seven-day poker game!

## **Beachcomber's Chantey**

Sing ho! sing hey! for the salty spray  
And the billows that break and roar!  
Sing three times thrice for the bath-  
house price—  
A couple of bucks or more!

Sing hey! sing ho! for the tide that's low!  
Sing hey! for the sloop and barge!  
Sing biff! sing bam! for the costly clam!  
Sing high! for the cover charge!

Sing ho! sing hey! for the Sabbath day!  
Sing hey! for the waves that foam!  
Chant any old thing you choose to sing,  
But leave this bard at home.

## The Vermilion Blues

I ain't been deprived of my best gal;  
I don't want to go to Mich. or Cal.;  
I got all I want to eat and drink,  
But it makes me mournful when I  
think—

I say it makes me sad enough to sing  
and shout,

“I haven't got a thing to have the blues  
about.”

There is not a  
Dog-goned thing;

I ain't got a  
Blue to sing,

And I cannot weep, I said I cannot bawl,  
Because I got no blues at all.

## On Barbers

The barber held the mirror up behind  
So I might see the way I looked in back  
And approve and praise the wonder of  
his art

Yet—as I have observed a hundred  
times—

Suppose I should not like what he had  
done,

Suppose I said, “Well, that’s a rotten  
haircut,”

Would it improve the appearance of my  
neck?

And as the barber held the mirror up  
I thought how like to Consciousness was  
that,

To Consciousness, and Life, and the  
Universe.

The mirror is held up for us to look  
And if we like it not, what can we do?  
Nothing at all. We cannot even say,  
“Oh, well, next time I’ll get another  
barber.”

## Sehnsucht

She gazes across at the Palisades,  
With a dull and lustreless eye;  
And hope within her flickers and fades,  
And she draws a minor sigh.

Yearful her gaze, and deep and fond,  
As she looks across the hills,  
And she seems to long for a land beyond  
And the splash of daffodils.

She lifts her eyes to the great above,  
And watches the misty gray;  
And I think her heart is abrim with love  
Of a dead and happier day.

Of a day when she roamed on the Open  
Road,  
When the boundless plain was hers,  
When the prairie sweep was her abode  
And her carpet the grass and furze.

## SEHNSUCHT

“Oh, why do you gaze, my dear, my  
dear,

And muse on the misty sky?”

“I’m afraid that it isn’t going to clear,  
And we won’t get the washing dry.”

## To Polyandra

Lady, listen to me;  
Hearken to my cry:  
Yours a heart that's roomy.  
Tell me why.

Yours a head replete with  
Thoughts of many men;  
Making each compete with  
Eight or ten.

Think on this idea:  
[*Vox humana* stop]  
Yours should really be a  
One-man top.



## Destitution

Whene'er I take my walks abroad  
How many poor I see!  
I weep for Ethel, May, and Maude,  
And curse their poverty.

I've seen a girl whose heels were worn,  
And one whose scarf was frayed;  
I've glimpsed a maid whose veil was  
torn,  
Whose gown was ready-made.

But on the subway yestere'en  
Sight not to be forgotten!  
Oh Poverty! I saw a queen  
With stockings made of cotton.

## **The Mercenary Lover**

Sing me a song of the South, my love,  
Of dear old Dixie land;  
Where flowers are abloom and skies  
above  
And the climate's pretty grand;  
Where the mocking birds and the  
cuckoos flit  
All day from tree to tree.  
Make me a song like that, and split  
The royalties with me.

**From the Freudian's "Sylvie and  
Bruno"**

She dreamed she saw a coach-and-four  
A-standing by her bed;  
She looked again and dreamed it was  
A horse without a head.  
"I guess I'll be psych-analyzed"  
The little lady said.

## The Flappers' Freudian Song Book

"Come where my love lies dreaming,"  
That song our parents enjoyed.  
But now, her bright eyes beaming,  
My love reads Old Doc Freud.

\* \* \* \* \*

Last night as I lay on my pillow,  
Last night as I lay in my bed—  
Last night as I lay on my pillow,  
I dreamed of Alonzo and Fred.

\* \* \* \* \*

I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,  
With Herbert and Al by my side;  
I dreamed I was passing Niagara Falls  
And I was a joyous young bride.  
I dreamed of a tree and a ship and a fire,  
And a garden with ten high walls;  
And it means that for years I've sup-  
pressed a desire  
For nothing like marble halls.

## Thrift Mottoes for Framing

*For Thrift Week*

Save, and the world saves with you;  
Spend, and you need a loan;  
And it ain't a bad bet you can probably  
get  
It from some one who wasn't a drone.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you have an extra dollar,  
Save it!  
Do not give away your collar—  
Save it!  
It is wonderfully nice  
When you always have the price.  
If you like to give advice,  
Save it!

## The Poets Revised for Smile Week

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be  
sad?

Like a slow-going hearse or a moribund  
shad?

What matters injustice, what boots  
unemployment?

Let's smile for a week in unbridled  
enjoyment.

\* \* \* \* \*

Home they brought her warrior dead,  
But she smiled and smiled and smiled.

\* \* \* \* \*

Be gay, sweet maid, and let who will be  
tearful;

Do merry things and think them all  
the while;

And so make woe and death a glad and  
cheerful

And broad sweet smile.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE POETS REVISED

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!

Sit and watch by her side a minute  
Let something helpfully sweet be said:  
Never a tear but a smile was in it.

\* \* \* \* \*

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But she is in her grave. Ho! ho!  
Tee hee! tee hee! tee hee!

## **The Strange Case of Alonzo Benjamin O'Toole and Edgar Arthur Abbott**

Alonzo Benjamin O'Toole was plain and  
puritanical;

His bent was all for engines and for other  
things mechanical.

A graduate of M.I.T., that thorough-  
going school,

No student in his class knew more than  
Engineer O'Toole.

No trouble in a motor car, with all its  
wild vexatiousness

Could ever fret Alonzo's wide and ex-  
cellent capaciousness.

He knew a cam-shaft from a brake, a  
piston from a plug;

He had the mind, he had the hands that  
mark the Motor Bug.



## THE STRANGE CASE

Now Edgar Arthur Abbott was Ineptitude personified;

It wasn't any pose with him—his ignorance was bona fide.

His least attempt at manual things was always bound to fail.

"A motor car?" he used to say. "I couldn't drive a nail."

One day they took a motor ride, and something failed to generate.

They raised the hood; they got the tools and tinkered and—at any rate,

Who was it made the engine go so sweet and strong and cool?

Our hero, as you may have guessed, Alonzo B. O'Toole.

## Poetry and Thoughts on Same

I sit here at the window  
This Tuesday afternoon,  
In the editorial room  
Of the New York *Tribune*.

I hear upon the cobbles  
The tramp of horses' feet;  
The newsboys' loud obscenenesses  
Here in Frankfort Street.

The echoes of their voices  
Back to me are hurled  
From the brownstone walls of the  
building  
Of the New York *World*.

I see the business office,  
And I see the floor above it.  
I see and hear a lot of things.  
Suppose I do. What of it?

## POETRY

“What of it?” Ignoramus!  
That obviously shows  
How little I know of Poetry,  
How all my thoughts are Prose.

“What of it?” If I said that,  
Were I so analytic  
About the Modern Poetry,  
You’d cry, “A rotten critic!”

Yet that is what I think about  
This Tuesday afternoon  
In the editorial room  
Of the New York *Tribune*.

## **Christmas Greetings for 1923**

There was a man in our town  
And he was wondrous wise;  
He said he'd never send a Christmas  
Card to any guys.

But when he opened up his mail  
From many friends and cousins,  
He jumped into a stationer's shop  
And sent out several dozens.

## An Echo of the War

I purchased scores of Liberty 4s when  
the Hun was at the gate,  
And I bought cigars at war bazars, and  
I paid a dollar straight.

The bread I had was pretty bad, but  
the soldiers needed the wheat;  
And—it seems like a dream—but I used  
no cream, and my coffee was far from  
sweet.

Contributed I with a will to the Y.; to  
the Am. Red Cross I gave,  
When I was a dub at Neufchâteau and  
my wife was a Washington slave.

Now I'm not sore at the silly old war—I  
go where duty bids;  
But what became of the old tin foil I  
gave to the Belgian kids?

I'm not the kind to keep in mind the  
wrongs of a bygone day.  
I can take a bath in the grapes of wrath  
and emerge debonair and gay.

## SO THERE!

The forgivingest guy in the world am I,  
and seldom I bear a grudge;  
And I often sing to myself, "Old thing,  
who are you that you should judge?"  
But once in a while I lose my smile,  
and I bite on my cigar,  
And you'll maybe learn that the worm  
can turn, and I can be pushed so far.  
For this is what gets me wild and hot  
till I grind my teeth and dance:  
Whatever became of that old tin foil  
I gave to the kids of France?

My bonds are low, but I let that go—  
I never was one to bawl,  
Though the things I thought were what  
I fought for weren't the things at all.  
I pay my tax and I make no cracks at  
the ridiculous government;  
If I knew how to adjust the row, perhaps  
I'd be President.  
When liquor quite disappeared from  
sight I raised no protesting voice,  
And if Sundays blue should be our due,  
I'll dutifully rejoice;

## AN ECHO OF THE WAR

But Berserker ire sets me afire with a  
flame that can't be hid,  
When I wonder who got that old tin  
foil and what miserable good it did.

## Song

You ask me why I love you, sweet,  
What makes me worship at your feet.

You tell me why this hawthorn tree  
Produced the blossoms that you see;

And tell me why these thrushes here  
Are making music for your ear;

You tell me why the sky is blue—  
And then, perhaps, I'll answer you.  
—WAYNE GARD, in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Nay, I can tell the reason of  
My logicless and reverent love:

I know not why the hawthorn tree  
Produced the blossoms that I see;

Nor know I why these thrushes here  
Are making music for mine ear;

But oh, my love, the sky is blue  
Because it's far away from you.



## The Drama

I once saw a gentleman wallop his wife;  
I've heard a girl holler "You brute!"  
I've heard a non-poet say something was  
"rife,"

And I once knew a child who was  
"cute."

I once heard a humorist say something  
subtler

Than what he wrote down on a page;  
But I've never heard one philosophical  
butler

Except on the stage.

I've heard an articulate guard on the L;  
And a negro who couldn't play tunes;  
I once saw an audience silent at "Hell!"  
And not even giggle at "Prunes."

I once knew a lady but honorable bettor,  
And a girl who would *not* tell her age;  
But I never saw anyone crumple a letter  
Except on the stage.

## Kingsley Revised

My fairest child, I have advice to slip  
you;

No saxophone could zoom a snappier  
lay;

And, if you will, a noisy hint I'll tip you  
For use to-day.

I'll tell you how to sing a jazzier carol

Than those of I. Berlin or Jerry Kern;  
Your useless bits of feminine apparel

You ought to burn.

Be wild, sweet child, and let who will be  
quiet;

Do noisy things, and give the boys  
the razz;

And so make Life, a syncopated riot,  
One grand old jazz.

## To Arizona and Return

Henry Schwartz was an expert watch-repairer.

You could see him in the window of the  
Sixth Avenue shop any day;

Any day and every day.

He'd been hard at it since 1899.

This spring his daughter, who lives in  
Arizona, induced him to visit her for  
a week.

Among the week's excursions was a trip  
to the Grand Canyon.

Schwartz thought it was all right but  
nothing to rave about—

When you saw one piece of scenery you  
saw them all.

The day he got back to the shop a man  
brought in a watch to be repaired.

"Say," said Henry, "that is the most  
beautiful main-spring I ever saw in my  
life."

## A Fair Crumpler

When they say "How's the boy?" I  
can answer;

When they ask "How is tricks?" I  
reply;

When a garrulous bird asks me "What's  
the good word?"

I'm there with a snappy "Good-by."

When they greet me with "Well, what's  
the scandal?"

I can tell 'em without getting dizzy;  
But I never know how to respond to the  
brow

Who says, "Well, are they keeping  
you busy?"

## **"Girl for Illusions"**

Girl for illusions. Give full particulars in first letter, salary expected, etc. Photos required; same returned. Write K. E. Jones, Broughton, Kansas.—*The Billboard*.

"Girl for illusions." K. E. Jones,  
Thy message clear from Broughton,  
Kansas,  
"Like one clear harp in divers tones,"  
Leads me to spill some stanzas.

Much have I traveled, much I've read,  
And men have bared to me their  
hearts;  
I know the thoughts of Mazie's head,  
Her sciences and arts.

Oh, K. E. Jones, deem me no churl,  
But, on this famed terrestrial ball,  
Nobody ever wants a girl  
For anything else at all.

## Health and the Vision

When I am full of zip, and strong,  
When to my lips the ready song  
Unsummoned springs; when I can see  
Clear-eyed the world, and you, and me  
Then do I see a world unjust,  
Few persons worthy love and trust;  
And sometimes things appear so bad  
That I see carmine, and get mad;  
And, full of strength and indignation,  
Pen some satiric observation.

When I am reft of pep, and weak,  
When fevered is mine ardent cheek,  
Then is my vision dulled, and I  
See all the universe awry.  
Then do I see a world unfair,  
And, with a heart bowed by despair  
At all the selfishness and greed,  
Bitter I grow, I do, indeed.  
And ill and weak, as I'm at present,  
I write some verses far from pleasant.

## To a Lady

Many a fairer face than yours,  
Many a keener mind,  
Many a girl with added lure  
Isn't hard to find:

Yours no face to launch a ship,  
Yours no lovely tress;  
Downy cheek or carmine lip  
You do not possess.

Yours is not the charm of youth;  
Yours nor grace nor wit.  
And I—since you want the truth—  
Don't like you a bit.

## The Newer Heroines

### *Sweet Alice*

Oh, have you observed your sweet Alice,  
Ben Bolt—

Sweet Alice with hair now so titian?  
She screams with delight when you play  
her some jazz,

And to toddle all night is her ambition.  
She swims and she rides and she motors,  
Ben Bolt;

She smokes, and she wallops the ball;  
And to-night when I asked her about  
you, Ben Bolt,

Why, she didn't remember you at  
all—

When I asked her to-night how about  
you, Ben Bolt,

Why, she failed to recall you at all.

\* \* \* \* \*



## THE NEWER HEROINES

### *Jenny*

Jenny kiss'd 'em when they met—  
Otto, Cedric, Aleck, Eddie,  
Bennie, Jimmy, Allen, Chet,  
Eustace, Henry, Bert, and Freddie.  
I'm a novice at the game;  
I don't understand the system  
As that polyandrous dame,  
Jenny, kissed 'em.

**On "In American," by John V. A.  
Weaver**

Las' night I read this book o' Johnny  
Weaver's;

Some little book it is, I'll tell the world.

Some writin' goof he is, I'll say he is.

The name o' this here book is "In  
American."

Now make me. This here Weaver, hear  
me tellin' ye,

Has got it over lots o' writin' birds.

He says a face full, an' he says it  
straight;

Lays off the mush, the hokum—if you  
get me.

None o' this Heart o' Gold beneath a  
Rough

Outside. This Weaver's guys talk  
reg'lar talk,

His janes get off the chatter like they  
spill

## ON "IN AMERICAN"

To me—an' you, unless you kid yourself.

Say, listen: If this Weaver was a frog,  
Er if he come a lecturin' from London,  
You'd yelp yer nut off, "Ain't the fella  
quaint?

His stuff is, like they say, from out o'  
the soil.

Too bad America ain't got no writers."  
Wha'd'ye mean too bad? You make  
me sick.

## A Fable for Critics

Says he that a book or play  
Merit hath, a crowd will say,  
"Roller he of logs, the crook,  
Thus to boost a play or book!"

Says he of some written stuff,  
"This is hokum, bunk, and guff,"  
"This," they'll cry, "is merely spite!"  
"You're a crab," Anon. will write.

Says he, "This is pretty fair,"  
"He's afraid," the folks declare.  
"Lacks the nerve of his convictions;  
Fears the publisher's restrictions."

Critics of the books and play,  
Heed not what the crowd will say.  
Praise or wallop, rave or fuss. . . .  
No one really cares a cuss.

## In the Chestertonian Manner

*Mr. Chesterton has written "Old King Cole" in the manner of various other writers. Therefore—*

Now Cole was King of Connecticut,  
And he was a merry soul,  
He lived in Lyme in the summer time,  
And thus he made his dole:

"What ho! my pipe!" said Old King  
Cole.

Replied the Puritan folk:

"No pipe for you where laws are blue  
And it's counted a sin to smoke."

"What ho! my glass!" said Old King  
Cole.

Replied the Puritan tribe:

"We do not think it wise to drink,  
Absorb, inhale, imbibe."

## SO THERE!

"My fiddlers three!" cried Old King  
Cole.

Replied the Puritans: "Nay!  
The Heavenly Maid is a wicked jade.  
We deem it a sin to play."

So Old King Cole of Connecticut  
Nor wept nor tore his hair,  
But, merry and old, his throne he sold  
And went away from there.

## **The Patriot**

I profiteered throughout the war,  
I profiteered for two years more.  
And when the people asked me why  
I kept my prices up so high,  
I told them that I had to make  
A profit for my country's sake.

And nowadays when prices fall,  
I tell the people one and all  
That everyone who buys and buys  
Will help the nation stabilize.  
Be prices low, be prices high,  
None loves his country more than I.

## De Senectute

When as a young and budding poet  
I gazed upon the stuff I wrote,  
I knew that stuff so weak and poor  
Would never rank as Literature.

And yet, I thought, what I have sung  
Is not so bad for one so young;  
When years and ripeness shall be mine,  
I may achieve the Mighty Line.

And in that withered yesteryear  
I used to take unwonted cheer  
In that De Morgan was a man  
Of seventy when he began.

But now that years have bowed my  
    bean  
And I am more than seventeen,  
I tell myself the bitter truth  
And know I was a lying youth.



## DE SENECTUTE

Now of my verse so thin and cold  
I say, Not bad for one so old;  
When I was twenty-four or -five  
Then, then my verses were alive.

Now I, as creeping age defeats  
Me, think of Chatterton or Keats,  
And say, Look at the stuff he did,  
When he was nothing but a kid!

But Time has taught me this, to wit:  
That Age has naught to do with it,  
That plenty be the years or scant,  
Some can be poets, and some can't.

## **The Found Chord**

Standing one day at the saxophone,  
I was peppy and full of booze,  
And my fingers wandered madly  
Playing "The Blah Blah Blues."

I knew just what I was playing,  
And what I had swiped it from;  
And I stole one strain of music  
And I said to myself, "Ho! hum!"

I stole six bars from Wagner,  
Seven from Rubinstein;  
And I said, "I'll bet I can sell this  
Melody that is mine."

And a music publisher heard it  
And said, in a way he has:  
"I'll tell the world you've got a hit;  
Oh kid, that is some jazz."

## THE FOUND CHORD

And the thing sold in the millions,  
And brought me wealth and fame;  
And the blush of pride was on my  
cheek,  
But never the blush of shame.

It may be that Richard Wagner,  
And Anton von Rubinstein  
Are turning in their graves now,  
But the royalties are mine.

## De Amicitia

Dear friend, whose merry Christmas  
card

Came yestermorning to my view,  
Wishes this weary, daily bard  
The same to you.

You put me on your annual list  
As though you wished me to recall  
The simple fact that you exist  
On earth at all.

I hold that lying is a crime;  
I haven't thought of you, old bean,  
A single thought since Christmas time  
Nineteen Nineteen.

Perhaps our lives have gone askew;  
The town is full of lights and lures.  
I have my various jobs to do,  
And you have yours.

## DE AMICITIA

Why not take up, old friend of mine,  
The threads? . . . Or, if you like,  
    old kicks,  
Ignore each other till Christmas Nine-  
Teen Twenty Six?

## To My Fountain Pen

O fluent fountain pen of mine,  
Methought once that the mighty line  
Was not to be inscribed by thee,  
But now the light has come to me.

The other night, at half-past ten,  
"Hey, leave me take your fountain  
pen!"

Said Edna Ferber. And she wrote  
Some stuff posterity may quote.

"O grant me of thy benefice,"  
Said Zona Gale, of Portage, Wis.,  
"The loan of that there monster quill."  
"Why, sure, Miss Gale," I said, "I will."

And then she wrote, with this here  
plume,  
Phrases that flower and words that  
bloom.

## TO MY FOUNTAIN PEN

"Your courtesy I shan't forget,"  
Said she who wrote "Miss Lulu Bett."

And Mr. Ade said, "Leave me take  
That fountain pen of yours." (To  
make,  
Perchance, a line as sound and sure  
As ever dented Literature.)

And so, fair fountain pen of mine,  
Thou canst inscribe the mighty line.  
Perhaps, if such a thing can be,  
The difficulty lies with me.

## After Reading a Lot of Poetry

My life is not a mirrored sea,  
Nor yet a limpid lake;  
Life is no mass of type to me,  
And not a printer's take.  
My life's not like a virgin page,  
Unlike a summer's night;  
My life is not an empty stage,  
Nor an electric light.

Your life, my love, is not a dream,  
Nor eke a field of corn;  
Your life's not like a threaded seam,  
Nor like a dewy morn.  
Nor jagged saw nor cutting knife  
Your life reminds me of;  
Unlike the pearly tear your life,  
Unlike a smile, my love.

My life is far from like a lake,  
As I observed before.  
Yours is unlike an angel cake,  
A table, or a door.



## AFTER READING POETRY

My life is not a ball or strike,  
Yours is no beaded purse.  
I don't know what our lives are like,  
So how can I write verse?

## Dulcinea Goes in for Verse

I don't know about Art,  
But I know what I like:  
Not the mind but the heart.  
I don't know about Art.  
Say, this Flagg's pretty smart;  
You can have your Van Dyck.  
I don't know about Art,  
But I know what I like.

When you want the police,  
They are never around.  
Though the hold-ups increase,  
When you want the police  
The preservers of peace  
Are nowhere to be found.  
When you want the police,  
They are *never* around.

When I go to a play,  
It's amusement I look for.  
I want something that's gay  
When I go to a play.

## DULCINEA GOES IN FOR VERSE

Why, I worry all day—  
What's a show or a book for?  
When I go to a play,  
It's amusement I look for.

If you only could write  
Half as well as you talk!  
I was saying last night  
If you only could write  
Half as well, why you might  
Be the best in New Yawk.  
If you only could write  
Half as well as you talk!

## Jealousy

Lady, the laugh that rippled from your  
lips

Was such as Chloë might have laughed  
in Thrace—

A laugh as certain as a swallow dips,  
As sure of grace.

Such notes as on a golden harp the wind  
Might once have played (See Bulfinch,  
Æolus),

I turned to see your face. (You sat  
behind

Me on the bus).

Yours was the face that launched a  
thousand ships;\*

A thousand eyes like yours hath but the  
night;†

Was Beauty's ensign crimson in your  
lips,‡

Your teeth were white.

\*Marlowe.

†Bourdillon.

‡Shakespeare.

## JEALOUSY

But not the celebrated babbling spring  
Bandusia\* boasted had a ripple half  
So clearly sweet. I never heard a thing  
Fair as your laugh.

Gazed I upon the rouser of your smile,  
On him whose words provoked that  
lovely pearled  
And lyric mirth. He was a dub, so I'll  
Inform the world.

Dulness and smugness sat upon that  
bird;  
And emptiness filled all his silly face;  
Trite was his talk; his every uttered  
word  
Was commonplace.

And as you listened to him verbify,  
And laughed at him whose wheezes  
should have pained you,  
What music you'd have made, I mused,  
if I  
Had entertained you!

\*Horace.

## **The Business Situation**

Consider Andy Bloggins,  
One of the business kings  
Who eight long brimming years has  
made  
Great profit selling things.

“How came your swelling fortune,  
Your growing pile of pelf?”  
Asked one; and Bloggins answered,  
“I made it all myself.”

“Conspicuous acumen  
Is mine for gleaning gold.  
The merchandise I bought at low  
At high I always sold.”

Consider Andy Bloggins,  
His views on dwindling trade.  
The second week of lower returns  
These utterances he made:

## THE BUSINESS SITUATION

"A curse on all the public  
That made this dread condition,  
Arising from the Democrats,  
The Reds, and Prohibition!

"For something like a week now  
I haven't earned my salt,  
Although I work and work and work,  
It's all the public's fault."

Asserted Andy Bloggins,  
One of the business kings  
Who eight long brimming years had  
made  
Great profit selling things.

## Winter

*Somewhat in the Calverley manner*

Janet, as the month of Janus  
(As I term it) comes to close,  
Seek I now the verse incanous  
As a substitute for prose.  
For, though you may find it tedium,  
And may grudge the treasured time,  
I prefer the metric medium,  
And I choose the chains of rhyme.

These, my Janet, are the days I  
Rise without a hint of haste;  
Take the frigid plunge with quasi  
Fear and tremulous distaste;  
These the days when I would rather  
Lie the day in bed than lave;  
When I whip the mollient lather  
For the matutinal shave.



## WINTER.

These the days I do not trek fast  
From my far too costly flat;  
When I dawdle with my breakfast,  
Speaking kindly to the cat;  
When, replete with melting pity,  
For the master of my fate,  
I contrive to reach the city  
Irremediably late—

When, a zealous lyric smiter,  
I essay to sing a song,  
And an editorial writer  
Talks to me the whole day long;  
When I read the final galley-  
Proof and pen the ultimate line  
With the knowledge that the Valley  
Of Contentment isn't mine;

Low morale is mine on these days  
Of alternate rain and snow,  
Chilly days and melt-and-freeze days—  
My morale, I say, is low.  
If, my Janet, you can reason  
As you read me, it may strike  
You that Winter is a season  
I enormously dislike.

## SO THERE!

Janet, yours the fervent query  
As to how I feel these days:  
Winter finds me overweary,  
Void of song and reft of phrase.  
Weary of this piffling planet,  
Of this ever-whirling wheel,  
That, I've tried to tell you, Janet,  
Is about the way I feel.

## The Real Interest

Any work can be started now if the man who has it to do is really interested in getting it over.—  
John Blake in the *Evening World*.

When I begin, at an early hour,  
To try to assemble The Conning Tower,  
I always have a terrible time  
To get a start with an opening rhyme.

I read the papers and I stare at the wall,  
And I look out the window, and other-  
wise stall,  
And I write a line with my fountain pen,  
And remember that I wrote it back in  
Nineteen Ten.

Then I cross it out, and I take my gloom  
And go for a visit to the City Room.  
I come back to my desk and try to write  
Enough to fill a column by eleven at  
night.

## SO THERE!

Now, regarding the observances of Old  
John Blake,

I have the following statement to make:

I find it pretty hard to get the stuff  
begun

When my real and only interest is in  
getting it done.

## The Seasons

Mabel, when the season vernal—  
Better known, perhaps, as Spring—  
Comes, I hate the job diurnal  
Like—forgive me!—anything.  
In the spring I hope the paper 'ill  
Give me leave to go away  
For the smiling month of April  
And the merry month of May.

When the sun of Summer scorches  
On the court and on the links,  
Yearn I then to lie on porches,  
Cooled by effervescent drinks.  
Sweeter far to stir the rickey  
And absorb the citric lime  
Than to chase the cheap and picay-  
Unely meretricious rhyme.

## SO THERE!

In the dwindling days autumnal—  
In, if I may say so, Fall—  
I detest the task columnal  
Worst, if possible, of all.  
Lures me then the primrose path of  
Dalliance; then would I immerse  
All my being in a bath of  
Almost anything but verse.

But, my Mabel, in the Winter's  
Unalluring cold and wet,  
I delight to give the printers  
All the stuff that they can set.  
Work—in Winter I enjoy it;  
Fast the dullest evening flees  
When I foolishly employ it  
On innocuous rhymes like these.

**Lines Written in Candor, with  
a Copy of "The Complete  
Works of Charles Stuart  
Calverley," to a Lady**

Dottie, who sincerely dottest  
With thy praise this lute of mine,  
Deeming me, thou say'st, the hottest  
Bard that sings the mighty line:

Dottie, jocund-hearted Dottie,  
I was never one to find  
Maculate the shield unspotty,  
Clouds upon the clearest mind.

When thou set'st the blithesome bay so  
Sweetly on my blushing brow,  
I were graceless to gainsay so  
Keen a lit'ry judge as thou;

To deny thy fairest, latest  
Utterance (January 5),  
Calling me about the greatest  
Minnesinger now alive.

## SO THERE!

Ruder I than any churlish  
Oaf to look for any flaws  
In simplicity so girlish,  
In so sweet—to me—applause.

Here, upon a silver salver,  
Find my heart; and with it find  
All the works of C. S. Calver-  
Ley, the greatest of his kind.

And whene'er thou read'st this volume  
Of the verse of C. S. C.,  
May'st thou know how good this colyum  
Actually ought to be!



## **To Annie, Gone but Not Forgotten**

It's weeks since you left our attractive  
abode—

The reason you went I've forgotten.  
I recall that you couldn't cook beef à la  
mode;

I remember your pastry was rotten.

Your bacon was soft and your steaks  
overdone;

Your coffee was bitter and muddy;  
The muffins you baked averaged ten to  
the ton,

And never a cookbook you'd study.

And yet you were gentle, dear Annie,  
and kind.

I wept when you told us you'd leave  
us,

For cooks from the country aren't easy  
to find—

You came from Cohoes or Schenevus.

## SO THERE!

That \$3.25 on my telephone bill  
Was a long distance call, and you  
made it  
To get your new job. . . . I'm a  
sport, but I will  
Admit that I winced when I paid it.

## To a Little Boy

Part of Eddie Guest's job as a father is to play with his son, "Bud." He may be busy on his other job of writing verses and articles, the job at which he makes a living. But if "Bud" says, "Aw, gee! you're always workin' when I want to play," that settles it; forty-year-old Father limbers up his knees and gets down to the biggest business of life, which is being a comrade to his ten-year-old boy.— *The American Magazine*.

May you have of life the best,  
Little son of Eddie Guest!  
Loom ahead the bitter years  
Full of labor and of tears.  
Time enough to work and study  
When you're old as Daddy, Buddy.  
Be it ball or marbles, play  
All the merry summer day.  
Nor forget to holler, "Stop  
Workin' an' play with me, Pop!"  
Make him stop, and how secure,  
Bud, your place in Literature!

## **Perversity**

When cosmic matters fill the world  
And Governments about are hurled,  
I note that men of every age  
Turn first to read the sporting page.

But when the Series games are played,  
Or Biff beats Wallop by a shade,  
I make this observation sage:  
First thing folks read's the sporting  
page.

## October

October, with its red and gold,  
Its magic touch on wood and wold,  
Its noons so warm and nights so cold  
    And pleasant;  
Its days are fair, its days are clear;  
It is the tenth month of the year.  
October, I might add, is here  
    At present.

But oh, my love, why should I trace  
The witchery of October's face  
In verse that's only commonplace,  
    When well you  
Must know the many things that are  
October's traits of earth and star?  
If not, most any calendar  
    Will tell you.

## **Song**

Better bards than I, my fair,  
Golder pens than mine,  
Ought to celebrate your hair,  
And lips incarnadine.

More melodious songs than I  
Ever hope to chant  
Ought to make the music my  
Penny piccolo can't.

Better bards with greater wit  
Ought to sing of you,  
But, my Dear, you must admit  
That they never do.

**THE END**













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